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ABSTRACT

These papers by four social scientists were prepared for a conference to analyze the current absence of a value consensus in American life and to examine grounds for a consensus. Further, the contribution of education and the media to the shaping and dissemination of values is explored. Kenneth Boulding contends that underlying moral diversity is a "constitutional consensus," or agreement about the legitimacy of processes by which differing values are coordinated. A greater tolerance of diversity develops as the constitutional consensus becomes more secure. Robert N. Bellah suggests that the dominance of "liberal individualism" accounts for the current loss of moral consensus. Marvin Bressler examines the role of the university and notes that the components of scholarly investigation (integrity, open-mindedness, humility, communalism, accountability) may aid in defining the moral functions of undergraduate education. William Miller points out the all-pervasiveness of television, which is not morally neutral, but rather an "enormously powerful phenomenon. . . about which society needs to make conscious social decisions." He emphasizes that the primary purpose of television is to deliver people to advertisers and that content is a secondary consideration. Miller concludes, however, that television justifies itself in its coverage of public events. A summary of discussions following the speeches is included. (KC)

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PREFACE

In our letter inviting prospective participants to attend this conference, we asked for help in analyzing the current absence of a value consensus in American life and in examining possible grounds for a new consensus. We added that we wished to explore the contribution of education to the shaping of values and of the media to their dissemination. These broad topics were presented first through four thoughtful formal papers, each focusing on one strain of the larger subject; each was responded to by individual conference members. The papers and responses then served as background and catalyst for the stimulating discussion that followed and that is here summarized.

Once again we are grateful to Beth Greenfeld for her skills as rapporteur and editor. We are especially grateful also to John D. Maguire and Harry E. Smith, president and secretary respectively of the Society for Values in Higher Education, who helped to initiate and organize this conference.

September 1978
The Rockefeller Foundation

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THE PROBLEM OF CONSENSUS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Kenneth E. Boulding

It is a truism, though surprisingly unrecognized, that all values by which human beings evaluate things are human values, at least orderings of some sort produced by processes of human valuation. Whatever are the larger values of nature and the universe, we can only approach these through our own processes of valuation. This does not mean, however, that human values are either arbitrary, meaningless, or incapable of criticism and change. There is a "real world" of "fact" which constantly criticizes and challenges our images of it, and introduces a bias in the change in our images, so that there is a constant pressure to eliminate error by processes of testing and to approximate truth by processes of search. In the field of human values, there are similar asymmetries of change. The critique of values and their selection under this impact, as well as the creation of new values by processes of social mutation, produce an evolutionary pattern which is neither wholly random nor completely determinant, but which has a prejudice in its dynamic deriving from something that at least by analogy we could call the real world of values.

The dynamic processes by which human valuations change are profoundly affected by the fact that the valuations of different persons differ. They differ because they are very largely learned in the process of individual growth, development, and education. There is little doubt that even human values have a certain biogenetic base built into the structure of our nervous system by the genes. Thus, from the moment of birth, we display certain values - liking milk, mother, warmth, security; and disliking loud noises if we are girls, or bright lights if we are boys, cold, insecurity, and so on. From the moment of birth,

however, we build on this genetic base, and by the time we are adults, these foundations are largely obscured by the vast superstructure of learned values. Because every individual has a different experience, all these superstructures are different, though in many cases the differences are only in detail. Sometimes, however, the differences can be quite large, simply because of the great diversity of human cultures and the strong tendency for individuals growing up within a particular culture to conform to its values. Differentiation occurs also because a few people break out from the cultures in which they have grown up and adopt a different set of values. They become radicals and conservatives, or whatever it is that the culture is not. There may even be something like a two-generation cycle, with the children revolting against their parents back to the position of their grandparents, against whom their parents revolted. Some cultures, on the other hand, are extremely stable, transmitting their values almost unchanged for many generations, like the Hopi or the Amish.

Values are coordinated by processes which do not necessarily involve consensus; that is, agreement about values. I have distinguished three major methods of coordination of values in society, which I have called the three p's - prices, policemen, and preachments. Prices, of course, is the market, which has the virtue that it coordinates different preferences by supplying different goods, and hence economizes on agreement. The market can accommodate teetotalers, vegetarians, drunkards, rock fans, and Mozartians, simply because any effective demand - effective in the monetary sense - has a high probability of producing a supply. Hence, the market can satisfy a wide variety of individual tastes without any necessity of agreement. There does have to be agreement, however, about the institution of the market itself. If that loses legitimacy, it cannot be sustained.

Policemen refers to the political order, which is the order of legitimated threat. Political decisions emerge out of a diversity of values by an enormously complex process which differs greatly from society to society, varying from tyranny, in which the preferences of the tyrant are imposed on the society, through various forms of oligarchy, to various forms of democracy, which include the enormously complex processes of election, voting, majority rule, minority veto, logrolling, political bargaining, and so on. Here again, there has to be an agreement of some sort, at least tacit agreement, on the constitutional forms and on the legitimacy of the political processes that are used.

The third form of coordination, which I have called preachments, is the moral order itself, particularly as it is reflected in the dynamics of legitimacy. Every subculture is defined by, produces, and perpetuates an ethos; that is, a set of preferences to which it expects its members to conform. A nonconformist receives criticism either in the form of the raised eyebrow, or the slight edge to the voice, or the thundering denunciations of the preacher, edging off into the sanctions of the political system and the stocks, the gallows, and the auto-da-fé. Individuals who persist in nonconformity will either be eliminated, expelled, or will leave a particular subculture. The larger society further criticizes the subcultures of which it is made; some of them may be driven out and some forced to conform. Indeed, the flight of nonconformists from their subcultures is one of the great sources of human spread and migration, from the Exodus, to the Pilgrim Fathers, to modern Israel.

In these processes of change, the role of the prophet who creates a "value mutation" is crucial. This is the charismatic figure who propounds a new set of values which competes with the old, criticizes the old, and sometimes transforms the old (although the values rarely survive in the form which the prophet

gave them). These prophetic figures are value entrepreneurs who often create organizations which perpetuate some version of the values of the founder through subtle combinations of persuasion, threat, and the simple selective value of truth.

It will be observed that these three methods of coordination involve a consensus at two quite different levels, which might be called constitutional consensus and decisional consensus. Constitutional consensus is agreement about the rules of the game, about the legitimacy of the processes by which differing values are coordinated. If consensus is withdrawn, the processes cannot operate. We see this even in the market, the legitimacy of which has always been a little precarious. It may begin in such phenomena as "silent trade," in which two tribes which cannot even meet without fighting develop a technique of trade without meeting. At the other end of the scale, certain types of markets lose their legitimacy, like slavery in the nineteenth century and capital markets in the communist world in the twentieth century. The old stock exchange in Leningrad is now a Palace of Culture and Rest because of the loss of legitimacy of this particular form of market; that is, a loss of the constitutional consensus which underlay it. Even though the market economizes agreement and does not require much decisional consensus, it still requires a constitutional consensus, without which it cannot really operate, and this can be threatened by political processes or by processes in the moral order. It is quite easy for the market to develop an illegitimacy which can be regarded as pathological, simply because both the political and the moral order tend to appeal to heroic value systems which despise the commonplace, whereas the market is incurably commonplace.

The political order, whatever form it takes, clearly demands a constitutional consensus, whether this is acceptance of the divine right of kings, the leadership of a charismatic dictator,

majority rule, Robert's Rules of Order, electoral procedures, party loyalties, political bargaining, and the like. When a constitutional consensus breaks down, the process breaks down, even though almost any political process is probably better than none. In the absence of political process, the threat system tends to get out of hand, and leads to the Hobbesian war of all against all, in which the life of man is nasty, brutish, and short. Terrorism represents a profound breakdown of the constitutional consensus toward the Hobbesian nightmare, but the strength of the political consensus is seen in the relative impotence of terrorism and the fact that if it is to succeed, it almost has to become constitutional. The political consensus is apt to be consensus about procedure rather than about results. It does not necessarily result in a decisional consensus, although by contrast with the market, in political life there must be more agreement about decisions, even if it is only an agreement to disagree. But decisional consensus is not necessary as long as a constitutional consensus remains, as long as we accept the king's right, the rule of law, majority voting, and so on.

In the moral order, distinction between constitutional and decisional consensus is perhaps less clear. But, even here, a decision to remain in a culture is a sort of constitutional consensus which may involve the suppression of decision - putting on a front, telling lies, conforming outwardly to hide an inward nonconformity. Within a particular subculture, a decisional consensus, or at least the appearance of it, tends to be important, although there is an interesting problem here in the development of subcultures of toleration, in which diversity of individual values can be tolerated because the culture itself includes diversity as a value and has some overriding value that defines the subculture in a narrow range of "essentials," which then permits a wide diversity in what is regarded as "nonessentials."

Here culture and subcultures are edging toward the market solution, as, for instance, in the separation of Church and State, which implies the identification of religious belief is a marketable commodity in which a person can buy what he chooses without threatening the underlying unity of the society. I recall the masthead of a Philadelphia Quaker journal that said: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

It is possible to trace a long, historic movement with many ups and downs toward reducing the preferences that are regarded as essential and increasing the range of those in which we have liberty, which are regarded as nonessential. This is a movement toward heterogeneity in culture. It is at least a rough generalization that the more primitive a culture, the more homogeneous it tends to be and the less tolerant it is of diversity and nonconformity. We should not necessarily, therefore, view an increase in toleration as evidence of a lack of consensus. It may represent the development of a larger constitutional consensus about what diversities are tolerable. Thus, we see a movement from enforced uniformity in religion and established Churches to free competition. We see this now in sexual behavior, with gay liberation and so on - attempts to legitimate diversities which previously have been regarded as unacceptable. We see it also in a shift of the traditional role of the sexes, opening up to each sex patterns of behavior and culture which previously were unacceptable, all within the larger constitutional consensus. On the other hand, there always remain the essentials in which unity is necessary, and there are subcultures, like the Weathermen and terrorists, who are excluded from toleration because they do not conform to the constitutional consensus, in which the rejection of violence is almost universally important, except as it is applied to foreigners. Even within organizations - for instance,

within individual Churches, within corporations, within universities, even perhaps within the American Legion - we find a greater tolerance of diversity developing as the constitutional consensus becomes more secure.

As we now look at the history of the United States in the light of the above considerations, we can see, I think, that the constitutional consensus has been remarkably tough in terms of the political constitution and even the political subculture. It is not only that the American Constitution has lasted a long time - the United States is now about the eleventh oldest country in the world in terms of operating under a continuous constitution or even political subculture - but this Constitution has survived some spectacular changes and some very grave threats: it survived the enormous Westward expansion; it survived the rise of the corporation and the transformation of the economic system from a system of small firms and independent craftsmen to one of enormous corporations and a large organized labor movement; it survived the Great Depression, when unemployment rose to 25 percent, corporate profits were negative for two years, and it looked as if the whole economic system was on the point of disintegration. Yet we passed through this without any constitutional change, except the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment (Prohibition), without any fundamental change in the party structure, without any substantial change in the political culture. The New Deal represented no change in the constitutional consensus; it represented a very small change in the actual organization of society.

Constitutional stability and continuity have marked the history of the English-speaking societies in North America from the very beginning. Even the American Revolution led to very few changes in the actual institutions of the society: the economic institutions were practically unaffected; there was some expan-

sion, though not very much, in the proportion of time and effort devoted to political institutions. But even from the point of view of the political institutions it created, the American Revolution was extraordinarily British. It is one of the ironies indeed that the American Revolution created a much more monarchical society in the United States and a more republican society in those British countries that preserved the monarchy. Certainly, George III would have considered his wildest dreams realized if he had had the powers of the American President, even in the eighteenth century. The differences in the underlying political culture between the United States and the other English-speaking countries are not really very great, and the political culture is far more important than the constitutional differences. Because of our monarchical constitution, it is more troublesome in the United States to get rid of a President, like President Nixon, than it would be to get rid of a similar prime minister in the countries of cabinet government. A political culture that will tolerate rascality only up to a certain point, that will rise to an occasion and transcend personal interest when the national interest seems to demand it, and that prefers argument and persuasion to threat, even while it holds that in reserve, is a common legacy of all the English-speaking societies, and of some, though by no means all, of the British Commonwealth countries. The recent political experience of India, for instance, is remarkably reminiscent of Watergate, and is again a legacy of the type of political culture which originated in Locke's England.

It is at least a reasonable hypothesis that this "Lockean" political culture is stronger in the United States today than at any other time in the last 150 years. The Civil War, of course, saw a massive breakdown of this political culture; its legacy still persists, but it is dying. The integration of the South into the political and economic life of the United States

is one of the most striking, but perhaps one of the least noticed phenomena of the last fifty years. Atlanta, that great symbol of Southern resistance and Northern imperialism, is now unequivocally an American city. Per capita incomes in the South have trebled while per capita incomes in the North have doubled in the last forty years or so.

The various socialist and communist movements of the twentieth century are far less of a threat to American political culture than was the plantation culture of the South. There was a moment perhaps in the thirties - the communists were organizing the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), dominated a dozen or more of the labor unions, and had obtained a kind of radical chic in literary and artistic circles - when it looked as if, had the Depression persisted, we might have slid down into a centrally planned economy. The failure of the communists, and even of the socialists, to attract any substantial following, however, is an extraordinary tribute to the constitutional consensus in the United States. Part of this undoubtedly was their own folly and political ineptitude, and the destruction of that personal trust and simple friendship relation which is a high value in American culture; but part of it also was a widespread feeling that no matter how difficult our problems, we did have a way to get out of them in terms of the existing constitutional consensus. The rise of the labor movement, as perhaps the most conservative and nationalistic element in American life, and the failure of unorganized workers (who are a considerable majority of the American labor force) to develop any effective political organization or structure, in spite of the fact that they are unquestionably injured by the existence of organized labor, are again striking testimony to the widespread belief in the existing constitutional consensus. Activities that are truly revolutionary in the United States have been confined to an almost infini-

tesimally small group of people, numbered in tens rather than in hundreds, even though they have been visible beyond their numbers. Even those most critical of the American economic system, like Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, remained within the constitutional consensus and, from their own point of view, profitably so. Within that consensus, they had much more influence on actual political decisions than they would have, had they remained out of it. Often in the American political system, those who take the bomb perish by the bomb, and thereby tend to reinforce the very values which they despise and criticize.

In spite of the stability of the constitutional consensus, there have been long, secular changes in what this consensus means in terms of decisions, legislation, toleration, and the national image. The most striking of these changes has been the steady decline in the legitimacy of war and the corresponding decline in the legitimacy of the national state and of those political institutions which organize war. The measurement of legitimacy, of course, is difficult. It is something which is deep, underlying, and may not even appear in response to a questionnaire. My two major candidates for social indicators in the case of legitimacy would be popular songs and mail-order catalogs. These tend to reflect the underlying values of a society through a market mechanism in a way that neither surveys, voting, nor newspaper editorials can quite catch up with. The evidence from popular songs is overwhelming: The First World War, although a relatively minor operation for the United States, produced a crop of hearty war songs, which quickly swallowed up puny efforts like "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." The Second World War produced practically no war songs - it was seen not as a glorious opportunity for valor and excitement, but as a dirty necessity. The Vietnam war produced nothing but antiwar songs, like "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

The Sears Roebuck catalog for 1900 exhibits stereopticon lecture sets from the Spanish-American War, books with titles like The Story of American Heroism, Makers of Millions, or the Marvelous Success of America's Self-made Man, Indian Horrors, or Massacres by the Red Men, Heroic Deeds in Our War with Spain, and so on. Poetry, drama, and the movies tell the same tale. No modern poet could conceivably write "The Charge of the Light Brigade." Even Tolstoy's War and Peace challenged the institution of war, as did All Quiet on the Western Front. The Birth of a Nation is a fantastically different movie from Star Wars, with the first being unquestionably heroic, and the latter popular precisely because it is absurd - even the heroes are deliberately papier-mache. For the most part, the campus protests of the sixties were not against the constitutional consensus, nor even against capitalism, but were essentially against the Vietnam war, and once that was over the protests virtually disappeared.

There are two sets of reasons for this decline in the legitimacy of war: one lies in the logic of human valuations themselves, and the fact that war represents a fundamentally inconsistent set of taboos between the ingroup and the outgroup and between the alternating conditions of peace and war. Peace, whether within the ingroup or between groups, is a situation in which there are strong taboos on violence and even malevolence. War represents a sudden shift of these taboos, an enormous shift outwards, as it were, of the "taboo line," so that things which were previously taboo are no longer so, and are now even encouraged. This is an internal inconsistency in the value system which is a long-run threat to it, even though the short-run dynamics of the system continue to perpetuate it.

The other major factor is the change in the technology of war itself, which has enormously increased its costs to everyone and has tremendously diminished its benefits, particularly the

benefits of victory. It becomes clear that a war's losers often do better economically than the victors, and when the things that are gained by war in a positive sense, like empire, turn out to be costs rather than benefits to the victorious imperial powers, the institution of war is deeply threatened. This has come about partly by a change in the technology of war itself, partly by change in the technology of civilian production. It has become clear in the last 150 years that exploitation of other humans is an extraordinarily inefficient way of getting rich, and that imperialism diminishes the rate of economic growth of the imperial powers. Then, the technology of war itself has continually increased the range of the deadly missile, which has effectively destroyed what I have called "unconditional viability" in the threat system. This has turned all civilian populations into mere hostages of the military, not really defended by them. It has created a system which has a positive probability of almost inconceivable disaster, which could well be irrecoverable. Essentially this means that national defense is now an unworkable institution and can only lead to catastrophe. It only persists, indeed, through the myth of stable deterrence which people cling to in a desperate attempt to justify a system to which they visualize no alternative, although it can be shown that deterrence cannot conceivably be stable in the long run. If it were, it would cease to deter, and the historical evidence that all systems of deterrence have eventually broken down is overwhelming. We are living under an illusion, and this is dangerous to all forms of legitimacy.

The collapse of one legitimacy, however, can be very dangerous unless there is another legitimacy to take its place. The collapse of the legitimacy of war could be deeply threatening to the human race unless a substitute legitimacy is found. And up to now it must be confessed this has eluded us. We are indeed in

a limbo where both peace and war are illegitimate, and unless a political image can be discovered and a national image created which leads clearly to stable peace, the very illegitimacy of war may bring it on, and even accelerate the destruction that we all fear. Up to now, at any rate, the declining legitimacy of war does not seem to have threatened the basic constitutional consensus in the United States. People on the whole still believe that if peace is to be achieved, it will be achieved through the established constitutional methods, not by either withdrawal from society or by trying to overthrow it. Whether this would survive a nuclear war is an unanswerable question. At least there seems to be a reasonable probability that it would not, and that of all events that are conceivable in the next 100 years, a nuclear war would represent the greatest threat to the constitutional consensus of all countries, especially that of the superpowers. Nevertheless, the political culture of the United States, with its strong tradition of civilian control over the military, offers considerable hope of change. Perhaps the greatest threat here would be the collapse of the morale and internal legitimacy of military personnel themselves, for their self-doubt is perhaps the one thing that could lead to a military takeover in the United States. Even though the probability of this is low, it is not zero.

Another area where quite noticeable changes seem to be taking place is in the institution of the family and the relations of the sexes. The old taboos of "living together" (what used to be called "living in sin") and the taboos against divorce have declined very sharply. Part of this, again, may be the result of a technical change, this time in medicine. There has been a very marked decline in infant mortality in the last hundred, even seventy, years, coupled with easier methods of birth control, and perhaps increased costs of having children both economically

and psychologically. After the "bulge" of the fifties, we have had a precipitous decline in fertility up to the point where native-born Americans are now an endangered species and are not reproducing themselves, though they will take a very long time to die out at present rates. The feeling that the country is close to, or perhaps even beyond, its optimum population on many different standards is not often clearly expressed, but it may underlie some of the changes in attitudes and values. By no means is all of this bad. There is greater freedom in sex roles, and there is a tendency for fathers to take a larger role both in the birth and in the raising of children than they may have done in the past. At the other end of the scale, however, we do seem to have an increase in child abuse, though it is not wholly certain that this isn't simply due to better records; and the increase in sexual freedom among adolescents is causing very serious concern in terms of teenage pregnancies and an increase in venereal disease, as well as in the more subtle psychological effects which may be introduced by a decline in the sense of sacredness of sex and in the value of self-control.

All liberation has costs, and the critical questions are: How great are they? Are they worth the gains? It is often very hard to estimate. It is most important to ascertain just how these changes will affect the values and personalities of the children who are now being born. Here again, the pattern is mixed but by no means wholly adverse. If fewer children are born who are not wanted by their parents, if more attention is paid to "natural" childbirth and to bonding, a new generation may grow up psychologically healthier than the old. The most adverse effect may be a diminished willingness to tolerate partners in marriage, and the compulsive search for new experience could easily be adverse to human welfare. Clearly, there is an optimum amount of "putting up with things." Under the old taboos, people may have

put up with too much, and the new liberties may mean that we put up with too little.

Perhaps the most important social change in the last twenty-five years has been the development of television. Frightening statistics about the number of hours spent in front of the TV, especially by children, suggest that very new learning processes are being loosed on the society, and it is perhaps too early to say what the effect will be. One sees this most dramatically in a society like Quebec, where television destroyed an old equilibrium of culture which lasted for almost three hundred years and created a new and very unstable situation. On the positive side, television broadens the experience beyond the family. It is a great window on the world which spectacularly increases the information input. On the negative side, it is a highly distorting window, and the claim that the search for drama loosens the taboos on violence is not to be taken lightly. What the overall balance sheet is, I must confess I do not know.

Looking at possible future strains on the society that might threaten the constitutional consensus, one looks at the possibility of a very major slowdown in economic growth. In the last forty years, per capita real incomes in the United States have slightly more than doubled. At the same time, there has been practically no change in the proportion of distribution of income by income classes, which has been quite remarkably stable. For instance, the lower 20 percent have been getting about 5 percent of the income, the upper 5 percent about 18 percent of the income, etc. This means that we have about halved the amount of poverty in the United States in this period, but only because everybody got twice as rich, so that as the poor got twice as rich we halved the amount of poverty. At the same time, the middle class got twice as rich and the rich got twice as rich.

Projecting trends is extraordinarily dangerous. The

principal property of the future is uncertainty. Nevertheless, the probability that we are in for a considerable slowdown in the rate of getting richer seems very high. The main reason for this is that increased per capita real income only comes out of increased person-hour productivity, and this is possible only in certain sectors of the economy - most noticeably in agriculture, where it has been running 5 or 6 percent per annum; a little less so in the manufacturing industry, where it runs from 2 to 3 percent per annum; and not at all in industries like education, government, or medicine, where, if anything, productivity is either stationary or declining. However, increasing productivity in the "progressive industries" - agriculture and manufacturing - results in a shift of resources out of these industries into the nonprogressive industries of education, government, and health. Agriculture is a particularly spectacular case: because of the extraordinary increase in productivity, we now produce all the food we need, and even a little surplus, with less than 4 percent of the labor force, whereas in 1890 labor was 50 percent, and in 1776 almost 90 percent. However, we do not eat very much more per capita, although the expense of our diet has increased as we eat more meat. The main result of this increase in productivity has been the spectacular shift out of agriculture into other occupations - this amounted to some thirty million people in the last generation alone. This has helped to create the urban problem, which to a very large extent consists of displaced rural people who do not have the skills for city living. It has also provided the labor force, however, for the expansion of production of consumer goods which has constituted much of the rise in real incomes. Now this is over. Not only is it likely that agricultural productivity will not rise much in the next generation, it may even decline with increasing scarcities of energy and ecological difficulties. Even if it were to double in the

next generation, it would only release 2 percent of the labor force for other things. In manufacturing, similarly, increase in productivity seems to be trailing off. Contrary to expectations, automation appears to have made very little difference in overall productivity. Even the impact of computers on the overall economy has really been quite small, manifested in things like easy airline reservations or continuous compound interest at banks. Up to now, at any rate, only minor increases in overall productivity can be imputed to the computer. As the nonprogressive industries continue to expand, therefore, and even as the technological impulse which gave rise to the increased productivity in agriculture and manufacturing declines, we may expect a considerable decline in the rate of growth of real incomes. I will be extremely surprised if they double in the next generation, for there comes a point at which the growth of real incomes has to trail off. One thing that we are sure about is that growth at constant rates cannot go on for very long, and that all growth processes eventually slow down, even to zero. When we add the fact that cheap energy in the shape of oil and gas will almost certainly be exhausted in fifty years, and that all the substitutes seem more expensive (possibly more polluting and more dangerous), and that a four-fold rise in the price of energy is by no means improbable in the next generation, and add to this the possibility of increasing scarcities of certain materials (even of water), we see that the outlook for continued rapid growth is very poor.

The "great slowdown," as I have called it, may have two political consequences: it may make the control of inflation much more difficult simply because inflation is a prime way of fooling people into thinking that incomes are continuing to rise. Politically, inflation stems from the fact that everybody wants to have more than there is, and the only way to pretend to do

this is to increase the number of dollars without increasing the number of things; that is, by inflation. The other principal consequence is that there may be much more pressure for relative redistribution among the income classes, something that we have not had to face hitherto. If we are to reduce poverty by half in the next generation - which seems to be a reasonable objective for any decent society, in fact a very modest one - there will almost have to be actual redistributions away from both the middle class and the rich. This may be politically very difficult, and the political strains of redistribution may become quite severe. I doubt that they will become severe enough to threaten the constitutional consensus, in light of the enormous strains which the United States has survived in the past. That we should be prepared for increased strain seems very reasonable. A way of escaping this, of course, at least temporarily, would be a real move toward disarmament, which would release part of the 6 or 7 percent of the GNP that goes to the military; we would then be able to expand civilian incomes for a considerably longer period of time than otherwise would be possible. This would involve, however, a considerable change in the national image in the United States. It is important to realize that the national interest is a variable of the system, not a constant, for the national interest is what the nation is interested in and this can change radically, as it has many times in the past. The change would have to be toward modesty, the abandonment of the "great power" complex, even the recognition that being top dog is a very painful and insecure position.

My general conclusion is that of modest optimism. We may have a slightly harder road ahead, but with a reasonable combination of good luck and good management, we should be able to avoid the cliffs, survive, and indeed even profit from the challenges which the future almost certainly holds for us.

GROUNDS FOR A VALUE CONSENSUS IN AMERICA

Robert N. Bellah

I have argued (most fully in The Broken Covenant, 1975; most recently in "Religion and the Legitimation of the American Republic," Society Magazine, forthcoming) that the legitimating ideologies that have provided the source of American values have never been completely harmonious even at the beginning of the republic, and therefore that the traditional "consensus" has covered over implicit and sometimes explicit contradictions and tensions. For convenience, I have singled out three competing ideologies: biblical religion, republicanism, and liberalism.

In the case of biblical religion, I have emphasized the early Protestant collective vision of America as the New Israel, with the utopian millennial obligation to build God's kingdom on earth. This vision is strongly social, with a stress on solidarity and collective responsibility. John Winthrop's 1630 sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity," is a kind of charter for the biblical understanding of the American experience:

> For this end we must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection, we must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities for the supply of others' necessities, we must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality, we must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body....

To some degree, the Protestant sects pushed in the direction of a radical individualism that was compatible with the liberalism I will describe in a moment, but the main Protestant church bodies have never lost their social vision. When Catholicism

became a significant movement in America, it reinforced this social vision with its own central conceptions of natural law and the common good.

Republicanism was rooted in ideas inherited from the ancient world, from Greece, but particularly for the founders of our republic from the Rome of Cicero, whom they all had read extensively. The ancient republican tradition was supplemented by the thought of Machiavelli, Harrington, the radical Whigs and Montesquieu. The republican stress was on the voluntary participation of a relatively equal, uncorrupt, and virtuous citizenry in the political life of the community. Ever since Aristotle, republicanism had been seen as requiring a strong middle class with relatively few very rich or very poor. Jefferson's ideal farmer citizen, economically independent but active in the political life of his local community, is a good example of the influence of republican thought in America. Republicanism had a strong sense of the common good, of the need for public-spirited citizens ready to sacrifice their own interests for the community if necessary. The republican tradition viewed the state as having an educational and ethical role, for a republic will survive only so long as it reproduces republican customs and republican citizens.

Liberalism, which I would identify with much of modern English social thought, beginning with Hobbes and Locke, was related to the republican tradition but was rooted in fundamentally different assumptions about human nature. Whereas republicanism followed Aristotle in viewing men as by nature social and political and deriving the full expression of human individuality from participation in the common life, liberalism started with the biological individual seen as reaching rational maturity essentially prior to the formation of political society. In particular, property, very broadly understood to include life

and liberty as well as physical possessions, was seen as an attribute of individuals prior to their entering into society. Indeed, as Locke said:

> The great and chief end therefore, of mens uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property.

And again:

> The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, preserving, and advancing of their own civil interests.
>
> Civil interests I call life, liberty, health, and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like.

Locke, in contradiction to traditional natural-law teaching, found the chief obligation of natural law to lie in self-preservation. There was also an obligation to preserve other members of the species "when not inconvenient," but that latter obligation was too often breached to build a society on. Rather, political society was seen as that rationally chosen mechanism whereby the interests of individuals in the preservation of their property (including, of course, life and liberty) could be, so far as possible, guaranteed. Locke's society depended on the tacit assumption of the natural harmony of individual interests. Locke's assumptions could never justify Winthrop's biblical injunctions "Ye ought to lay down your lives for the brethren" (1 John, 3:10) or "Bear ye one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) any more than they could the republican ideal of the citizen sacrificing his own interests for the common good (perhaps symbolized at the extreme in Machiavelli's remark that he would risk losing his soul for the preservation of Florence). The liberal ideal was closely linked to what Louis Dumont has recently called "the genesis and triumph of economic ideology" (subtitle of From Mandeville to Marx, Chicago, 1977) and its attendant assumption

that the general pursuit of economic self-interest will result in a peaceable and free society. Liberalism thus tacitly rejected both the biblical idea that society is knit together with the ligaments of love (Winthrop) and the republican idea that society has an ethical and educational responsibility to create public-spirited citizens. Rather, political society was seen as having the restricted and minimalist obligation to guarantee the natural rights of individuals. The common good, which could be nothing more than the sum of the interests of individuals, would take care of itself.

While all three traditions can in some meaningful sense of the word be said to exemplify "individualism," the biblical and republican traditions viewed the individual as emerging from a fruitful dialectic with society. Individual and society were not seen as negating each other but as fulfilling and completing each other. Liberalism, on the other hand, gave an ontological priority to the individual, and treated society as having a merely derived reality, one that could be justified only as a mechanism to the fulfillment of (random) individual ends. During the expansive stage of capitalism, which has in America lasted almost to our own day, the contradictions between these positions have not clearly emerged. A rapidly rising general standard of living (though rising less rapidly for some groups than for others) has seemed to take care of the problem of the general good, and liberal individualism and capitalism, its economic expression, have been justified with rhetoric drawn loosely from the biblical and republican traditions.

Nonetheless, over time, with the increasing domination of much of our public and private life by the commercial nexus, liberal individualism has gradually assumed a dominance in our public life that it did not have at the time of the founding, and the biblical and republican traditions of public discourse have

been pushed ever more to the periphery, even though events like Watergate brought them once again to the center of the public stage.

At the moment, the ideology of liberal individualism seems to dominate most of our political life from the radical left to the reactionary right. The right narrows the traditional liberal concern for property to material possessions; the left emphasizes the equally traditional elements of life and liberty (the liberty to do what you list, as Winthrop would have said, not the liberty to do the just and the good). Both can appeal to nothing higher in justification than the interests of individuals. As Sanford Levinson pointed out in Harper's last May, this way of thinking utterly vitiates the fine phrases about "the rule of law" that we were treated to in the Watergate crisis. For if law is only the expression of the interests of individuals, it is (and the legal realists and positivists have said this for a long time) merely the rule of the stronger. When the natural harmony of interests has proven to be illusory, and the conflict of interest groups no guarantee of justice in a society where there are great disparities of wealth and power, then liberal individualism can itself be nothing but a rationalization for the rule of the stronger. The most extreme emphasis on individual rights becomes a justification for tyranny and the ultimate individual right the right to commit suicide.

The victory of liberalism over its two competing traditions has been the result not only of the victory of corporate capitalism as the dominant force in our public and private life, but has also profited greatly from the rise of pluralism as a problem and an issue. Racial, religious, linguistic, and ethnic diversity have all played significantly into the hands of liberalism. Any substantive pattern of value commitments can be accused of "ethnocentrism," and the biblical and republican traditions in

America have often been identified with "nativism." As a point of leverage to attack what were undoubtedly often oppressive cultural tendencies on the part of the early Protestant and Anglo-Saxon republican majority, religious and ethnic minorities have appealed to the radical individualism of liberalism. Since the state is not a school of virtue nor an educator of citizens from the point of view of liberalism, but merely a neutral nightwatchman guaranteeing the rights of individuals, liberalism could be used as a justification for removing the biblical and republican traditions from the public stage and thus leaving the plural communities to cultivate their own unique values.

America as a virtual empty space in which a variety of communities could pursue their separate cultural identities, or, perhaps better, America as a sort of benign "prisonhouse of nations," was the model here. But the recognition of the more oppressive side of the long dominance of the WASP tradition should not blind us to the problems raised by the recent rise of cultural pluralism as an alternative model. For when the religious and ethnic communities have embraced liberalism as the ideology that would guarantee their cultural integrity, they have discovered that their newly found bride has crushed them to death just as effectively as it has the dominant strands of old American culture. Where everything is to be sacrificed at the altar of individual interests, there is no more basis for community solidarity than for national solidarity. The mass commercial culture of corporate capitalism plays to the desires and fears of individuals and erodes the specifities of all cultural traditions with admirable neutrality. The result of liberalism is not a "community of communities," but, to quote Frank Coleman, "a society of hermetic individuals loosely presided over by police authority."

One might ask whether some of the newer ideological trends

might alter the rather bleak picture of the growing dominance of liberal individualism that I have been drawing. Unfortunately, I do not think they do. Social science has played a growing role in the justifications Americans use in public decisions, in spite of its alleged neutrality. But though there are a variety of strands in American social science, some of which, particularly the tradition of Durkheimian sociology, would warn against the dangerous erosion of common values and concern for the public good, the most popularly influential strands of social science only reinforce the liberal trend, for they share its assumptions. A basic utilitarianism that takes the interests of individuals as the ultimately real is not merely a feature of our popular culture. In sophisticated form it is the basic assumption of our economics, and much of our political science, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. Nor is it challenged by the increasing popularity of several kinds of Marxism in academia. Marxism is itself a product of that genesis and triumph of economic ideology that Dumont describes; it turns out to be not the deadly opponent of liberalism but only its slightly quarrelsome younger brother when it comes to basic assumptions about human nature.

The kind of popular psychology that reaches millions through the "human potential movement" appears to be mainly a psychological form of liberalism. The self and its needs are at the center of attention, and anything that inhibits "personal growth" such as spouses, children, etc., are to be jettisoned as soon as convenient. "You don't meet my needs," is the culturally sanctioned way of splitting from one relationship and returning to the endless search for someone who does. Naturally, the problems of fellow citizens never even reach consciousness in this realm of discourse.

While in their true religious radicalism Buddhism and other Oriental religious traditions reject every one of the assumptions

of American liberal individualism, they have been reformulated for mass consumption in such a way that they reinforce the message of "humanistic" social science. Indeed, some training in Zen Buddhism or Sufism or the like would seem to be de rigueur for any self-respecting "growth center." Of course, the capacity of psychological liberalism to absorb and co-opt religious traditions is nothing new in America. The psychologization of Christianity into a technique of self-help has been going on at least since the mid-nineteenth century, and psychological Christianity is still a major phenomenon on the American scene. While EST, with its touch of Zen and its dash of Gestalt psychology, might seem to be more sophisticated than "the power of positive thinking," the basic strand of what I am calling psychological liberalism remains the same.

If all were well at home and abroad, perhaps the regnant liberalism could go on its merry, triumphant way. But serious signs of strain have been detected by the vigilant, significant inabilities to make the hard decisions that reality seems to be forcing on us, and a lack of cultural and moral resources which might guide us in those decisions. These signs are not only visible to the intelligentsia. Large sectors of the American population have sensed that all is not well for some time. When the usual American answer to all serious questions about the system, the rising standard of living, seems no longer to be rising, or rising more uncertainly, and the costs of further rise, ecological and sociological, at home and abroad, seem suddenly to be very great, then there is an unusual opportunity to ask about alternatives. The power of the liberal juggernaut is so great that even if we detect that it is leading us to destruction, it may be strong enough to carry us all along with it. But in the face of grave reality problems, it may be possible to explore other answers to the question of the meaning of human

existence and other principles upon which to organize a society.

There are those who, like John Rawls and Lawrence Kohlberg, seem to believe that liberalism is so entrenched as our dominant ethos that only a humanizing and tempering of it can provide us with the necessary common values and ethical guidance. I am not impressed with their results, which seem to me to suffer from the same defects as the less sophisticated garden variety of liberal individualism. Rather I would attempt to revive those other once-central components of our culture, the biblical and republican traditions, which are, after all, not wholly antithetical to some aspects of liberal individualism though they have not shared its pathological hypostatization of the isolated individual. Only traditions that take society to be as ontologically real as individuals and that ground our values in ethical and spiritual insights that transcend the interests of individuals, that have a conception of the common good not just of the nation but of the human race, can begin to give us the coherence and direction that we need. While I believe the biblical and republican traditions need to be enlightened and enriched through exposure to recent advances in the social sciences and the insights of the great non-Western traditions, it seems to me that only they are viable alternatives to liberalism. Only they are deeply and broadly enough rooted in our society and our history to be likely to command enough popular support to serve as effective supplements to the errors of liberalism. Of course, we should not forget the dangerous proclivities of those strands in our tradition either - no powerful religious or ethical tradition is without its pathology. If I speak of a reappropriation of aspects of our past that have been for a time less influential than before, it is of a critical reappropriation that I speak, not some new form of fundamentalism.

If we seek a revival of the biblical and republican tradi-

tions as sources of direction for our public life, where might we turn for help? In the case of the biblical tradition, it seems obvious to turn to the religious communities themselves. Here the recent revival of "political theology" is promising, though some of it seems too infected with liberal assumptions to provide an adequate critique of them. Perhaps most useful here would be some dialectic between the American civil religion and what Martin Marty has called "public theology." Civil religion, abstract and marginal though it is, has provided a core of common values and commitments drawn from the biblical and republican traditions that liberalism has never been able to entirely eliminate, though that bastion of liberalism, the ACLU has valiantly tried to do so. The civil religion, however, remains largely empty if not fleshed out, developed and criticized by the public theologies of the various religious communions. In this realm, there is, fortunately, no public orthodoxy. Discussion and persuasion carry the day. But without the active effort of the religious communities to apply their insights to common problems, there are no public theologies and no conscious contribution of the churches to the formation of a common conscience.

Unfortunately, some of the communities that might have much to teach us remain so inwardly turned that they do not concern themselves with the common plight. Mormonism, for example, is a great and truly American effort to build the holy community. Brigham Young was a genuine nineteenth-century John Winthrop. But though Mormons remain strongly social in their concern for their own community, in the course of their twentieth-century accommodation to capitalism, they have become externally the proponents of a peculiarly inveterate form of liberalism, namely conservative Republicanism (with a capital R). Many of the conservative evangelical churches have been similarly solidary within and liberal in their social teachings (though they would

not understand "liberal" the way I am using it). Nevertheless, several of the major Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholics remain among the strongest exponents of an understanding of American life different from the regnant liberalism, an understanding that would place a social and religious conception of the common good, expressed through the criteria of love and justice, at the center of our public concern.

The discussion of "public theology" leads naturally to the question of whether there is any "public philosophy" that could articulate the republican tradition in a guise relevant to our present need. Though relatively isolated figures such as Sheldon Wolin or Harry Jaffa come to mind, it can hardly be said that there are any strong or coherent schools of public philosophy active in America today. The universities might seem to be the natural foci for such schools, but the universities are affected by their own particular brand of intellectual liberalism. Here the "free market of ideas" has produced a specialization and a professionalization that largely preclude concern with problems of the magnitude with which this paper is concerned. The dominant positivism of much of our social science assumes the primacy of individual self-interest in the explanation of human behavior and so is ill-suited to provide any critical leverage on the same assumption as a dominant ideological belief in our culture. The most sophisticated of our liberal intellectuals, such as Rawls and Kohlberg, mentioned above, continue a long tradition that goes back through Madison to Locke and ultimately Hobbes in believing that self-interest can, through certain formal-rational devices, be educated into some quasi-concern for the common good. These higher ethical insights, however, remain largely empty of any positive moral content, and it is difficult to see how they can provide either common values or ethical guidance in the making of difficult decisions.

Perhaps the most fruitful development which can be seen tentatively emerging in several fields, from philosophy to anthropology, is a concern with the hermeneutics of tradition. Following Paul Ricoeur, this tendency rejects both positivist abstraction and liberal formalism. It is rooted in the givenness of the traditions that it seeks to clarify. It tends to trust the wisdom of human experience when subjected to continuous conscious, rational inspection. But it is modest with respect to its contribution, deeply aware of the abyss over which all human traditions are perched, and has yet hardly moved beyond the relatively restricted circles of a few academic intellectuals. It is, needless to say, the premise of my own work (see Sullivan and Rabinow, Interpretive Social Science, University of California Press, forthcoming).

Often before in American history it has been political leaders rather than religious or secular intellectuals who have discerned and articulated the common concerns and the common commitments. One thinks of the entire generation of the founders of the republic, and nearly a century later of Lincoln. Lincoln remains the archetype of the political leader as teacher, and no one more effectively tempered our dominant liberal ethos with so powerful an application of insights drawn from the biblical and republican traditions. It was his task to reform and refound the republic, but the revolution that he sought to renew remains incomplete to the present day.

Barbara Jordan and Andrew Young have spoken eloquently and authentically out of the biblical and republican strands of our tradition, and the incumbent President has said some of the right words. But a political leader who understands our history and our institutions and who could teach us how to correct the one-sidedness of our recent past does not seem to be presently visible. Political leaders, however, emerge suddenly and, as it

were, by accident. A Rosa Parks refuses to move back in a bus and a Martin Luther King comes forth for a few brief years articulating the implications of the biblical tradition for our common life with magnificent insistence. But the problem now is to keep alive even a hazy memory of those strands of our tradition other than liberalism that might some day be embodied effectively in a leader or a movement that could direct American society toward a more humane and hopeful course.

THE ACADEMIC ETHIC AND VALUE CONSENSUS

Marvin Bressler

"Consensus," no more than "dissensus," has a prima facie claim on our solicitude. Such is the plasticity of social interpretation that both terms have been endowed with an array of favorable and pejorative meanings. Consensus conveys a comfortable sense of "solidarity," "sharing," and "community," but it also connotes "tribalism," "regimentation," and "indoctrination." Similarly, dissensus may suggest "diversity," "pluralism," and "freedom," or alternatively, "anarchy," "conflict," or "chaos." During the Eisenhower era, colleges were regularly chided for educating a "silent generation" of conformist "other-directed personalities" and "organization men," while in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, despite the propensity of students in unnatural numbers to occupy libraries for purposes of study rather than protest, many now worry that the collegiate population exhibits no common sense of social purpose or shared conceptions of the good life.[1] As with all complex issues, everything depends on balance and attention to nuance, and it does not much advance our understanding to treat tradition and change, conformity and deviation, affirmation and dissent, solidarity and conflict, as antagonistic and irreconcilable concepts. Both terms in each of these couplets describe necessary aspects of social, intellectual, and moral life, and colleges owe students and society not only the solace and cohesiveness which result from shared values, but also the recognition of doubt and ambiguity which are the conditions of criticism and renewal.

Nevertheless, if sober voices in the faculty club now dismiss the American Century and the Great Society with irony or despair, increasingly allude to Weimar and the Third Republic, and have occasion to refer to Hobbes, Gibbon, and Spengler, these

anxieties should not be dismissed as paranoiac musings by minds too finely tuned to catastrophe. The 1960's, surely one of the most terrible and exhilarating decades of our history, have left a doctrinal residue which has called into question a series of fundamental assumptions which had previously served as unifying sources of social ethics and personal morality:[2] [1] the emergence of a more restrained conception of the proper uses of American power has raised doubts about the interventionist impulse which has informed the foreign policy of the United States since World War II; [2] the recognition that finite resources and potential damage to the ecosystem impose rigorous constraints on the long-term rate of economic growth has disconcerted socialists and capitalists alike, since both have regarded abundance as an indispensable requisite for social justice and stability; [3] the insistence on their own worth and distinctiveness by previously "invisible" racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, women, and homosexuals has resulted in pluralistic modes of cultural expression and challenged the metaphor of the "melting pot," which supposes a single, uniformly acceptable "American way of life"; [4] the theory of "equal results for all social groups" rather than "equal opportunity for all individuals" has provoked intense controversy as to the legitimate basis of access to possessions, power, and prestige; and [5] the widespread diffusion of a pleasure ethic, the quest for "self-actualization" and the claimed right "to do my own thing," has collided with older notions of Calvinist sobriety, restrictive sex and monogamous marriage, and the redemptive power of work.

These novel assaults on previously unassailable collective beliefs are significant beyond their capacity to generate disputes about issues that routinely occupy citizens in any free nation. They are divisive in a more fundamental sense. Taken together, they represent a comprehensive critique of the under-

lying standards by which Americans have judged their society, their careers, and their lives. The defenders of the status quo and its enemies as well as perhaps the larger numbers who are merely confused and ambivalent are mainly unified only by the shared conviction that the social universe is awry and that individual lives are without compass. It is no wonder, then, that in the present historical context, alarmed observers have yearned for some measure of harmony and consensus and have impeached colleges and universities, in the words of W.H. Auden, for "lecturing on navigation while the ship is going down." A passage from a recent monograph by Earl McGrath typifies this call to the collegiate sense of duty.

> If a reconstituted and generally acceptable value system is to be conceived and disseminated among the members of society, the centers of learning must take a large part of the responsibility for doing so. Why then should scholars not place this matter high in the list of priorities among the purposes of their research and teaching activities? The exclusion of the very aspects of life which give meaning to an individual's or a society's existence is one of the most difficult features to understand in the evolution of higher education in Western culture. What we believe in and what we stand for and the validity of our convictions in terms of personal happiness and national well-being ought to be the central subject of research and teaching in the entire educational system. The institutions of higher education have the greatest responsibility in this area of learning because they alone are able to put the whole apparatus of scholarship to work in studying our value commitments and evaluating their validity in relation to conditions of life today![3]

It is not altogether clear from this appeal or others of its genre if undergraduate institutions are asked to: [1] place more emphasis on the study of personal and social values; [2] encourage students to prefer some general values over others; or [3] bind students to <u>specific derivations</u> of more abstract value standards. These approaches represent a movement from moral

neutrality to advocacy, and from principle to application, and it may be helpful to explore the implications of each alternative for developing a value consensus among students.

Colleges have never neglected "values education," if all that is meant by this term is the analysis of moral issues. Indeed, every branch of study - arts, letters, and the sciences - purposively or unwittingly comments on the adequacy of moral aspiration and reasoning. A student who is engaged in the "purely academic" study of the grandeur and folly of human history, or of the world's artistic and literary treasures, or of the competing claims of the great religions and philosophical systems is inescapably confronted by the desperate Kantian questions "What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope?" And since ideals are not the same as fantasies, he is invited to consult the sciences the better to decide if what is known about nature and human nature encourages or deflates the extravagance of his dreams.

Value analysis, so conceived, requires the student and not the institution to decide what ethical principles he can support. He is exposed to a spectrum of competing views delivered from the podium and in forums outside the classroom, and even those faculty who are not willing to endorse particular moral goals are prepared to examine their internal consistency, estimate the probability that they can be attained, comment on the appropriateness of the means, and indicate what costs would be incurred in achieving the desired end. It is puzzling how a consensus on a "generally acceptable value system" would result from embracing this sort of value analysis except on the devout rationalist assumption that principles capable of dispelling moral dissensus are "out there" if only more people consented to think more energetically more of the time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, students at the University of Pennsylvania who were

guilty of disciplinary infractions were treated with special severity if they had been exposed to a course in philosophy and were thus presumed to know right from wrong. Innocence once lost is lost forever, and for the modern sensibility, value analysis is inherently a subversive undertaking which is more likely to have the effect of converting certainties into problems. If John Rawls and Robert Nozick are at odds over the most fundamental meanings of distributive justice, so may be sophomores.[4]

Nor is there much reason to believe that the recent revival of interest in "general education," for all of its salutary implications for curricular reform and moral "consciousness-raising," has significant consequences for developing a values consensus. Critics may be justified in asserting that the ascendance of the graduate school, disciplinary insularity, and excessive specialization have virtually eliminated the "Big Issue" from consideration in the classroom, and that common exposure to the grand tradition of Western and world cultures is the sine qua non for serious exploration of social and personal values. But a shared universe of discourse is at best a necessary but insufficient condition for shared convictions. A community of student-philosophers which broods about the timeless mysteries of truth, beauty, and ethics will be unified by the brooding and separated by the diverse responses of its members.

Value consensus becomes a meaningful ideal only when a college is willing to proceed beyond analysis and is prepared to state its corporate preference for particular values. It can then try to recruit students who are already convinced or persuade the unconverted to accept its specific moral stance. A whole series of converging circumstances both outside and within the academy have discouraged any such practice by all except a relatively small number of mainly church-supported institutions. Most other colleges have been reluctant to adopt similar prac-

tices because: [1] internal consensus gained through religious or secular sectarianism at the institutional level might further exacerbate divisions in the nation at large; [2] society provides generous support for higher education partly in the anticipation that free inquiry and disinterested advocacy yield social benefits that would be seriously diminished if each college acted as a special interest group with tendentious purposes of its own; and, perhaps most important [3] the dominant metaphor of collegiate instruction, "the marketplace of ideas," impresses many as inconsistent with any fixed institutional position on moral issues. Since all ideas must compete with the doctrines of the past and the yet unimagined formulations of the future, it would be philosophically arrogant to "settle" questions, to arrive at "final" solutions, to "dispose" of ethical issues. If the history of ethical inquiry has been marked by cyclical enthusiasms, it is altogether likely that today's invincible conviction will become tomorrow's regret.

These general considerations of policy, prudence, and scholarly reticence which often restrict institutional pronouncements on values to banalities of catalogue prose are reenforced by uncertainties about the definition and prospects of "successful" instruction in the values domain. Specifically, several crucial questions still await definitive responses: [1] Can higher education exert an appreciable influence on the development of <u>any</u> values among undergraduates? [2] What comparative advantages, if any, do universities and colleges enjoy in transmitting <u>particular</u> values among all those who might plausibly claim universal assent? [3] Are the tenets of the academic ethic, thus specified, sufficiently powerful and inclusive to constitute a significant contribution to an American value consensus?

The answer to the first of these questions is only moderate-

ly reassuring. The empirical findings on college impacts as revealed in the standard compendia which have appeared during the last fifteen years - Sanford; Feldman and Newcomb; Clark et al.; and Solmon and Taubman - have been remarkably stable and may be briefly summarized as follows:[5] [1] undergraduate students acquire considerable information about the nature of value choices and moral issues, but it is not known how much of this knowledge is retained; [2] college attendance is modestly related to marital stability, mental health, political participation, economic conservatism, commitment to libertarian values, racial and ethnic tolerance, and lawful behavior; [3] authoritarianism, dogmatism, and prejudice decline, and attitudes toward public issues become progressively more liberal from the freshman to the senior year, but the magnitude of the changes is slight; [4] students concentrating in the social sciences are more unconventional in their personal values and less orthodox politically than majors in the humanities and the natural sciences; [5] the collegiate impact on values is somewhat more pronounced in small four-year residential colleges which provide opportunities for significant interaction among students and informal contacts with professors; faculty, as such, do not appear to be influential except in such settings; [6] values of students who have completed courses in ethics or citizenship do not differ appreciably from those who have not been exposed to such offerings; and [7] research designs which have controlled for confounding variables and selective factors reveal that the characteristics of the students such as SAT scores, social class, sex, and ethnicity account for a substantial part of the observed variance in ethical outcomes.

These findings may sadden but should not astonish those who hope that college has a significant influence in the ethical domain. Schooling is not the same as education, and by the

college years, the cumulative impact of other socialization agencies such as the family, the church, and the mass media may have significantly reduced the area that is subject to change. Nevertheless, in view of the relatively primitive state of the art in measuring subtle outcomes, it would be premature to dismiss the possibility that values could be significantly altered during the college years without detection by currently available research instruments. This caveat seems especially warranted since existing findings seem to contradict collective experience. When so many testify in print and conversation that college has significantly influenced their moral development, this too must be reckoned as evidence.

In any event, it can hardly be said that we have exhausted the opportunities for influencing moral development either through modification of the campus environment or classroom techniques. The most fundamental pedagogical issues remain unresolved. Should values instruction be confined to special courses or introduced throughout the curriculum, required or optional, taught by individual professors under departmental auspices or by interdisciplinary teams, wholly campus-based or include a "field" component? Perhaps the most striking recent change involves the transfer to students of powers formerly held in loco parentis and their increased participation in every major aspect of institutional existence. The purpose of inviting students to share in decisions affecting corporate relationships, educational programs and internal order rests on the assumption that such participation is, so to speak, laboratory instruction in the processes of moral choice, and it is hoped that students will emerge from this experience less dogmatic and doctrinaire, and more tolerant and receptive to different points of view. The transformation of academic communities, some the size of small cities, into parliamentary republics engaged in garrulous

debate and delicate maneuver over spheres of influence, apportionment, rites of due process, institutional policy, and the like, may entail unwanted costs, but this untidy process may, nevertheless, teach students much about the nature of democratic values. There is no norm that is more worth transmitting than the procedural principle that the losers having lost will consent to lose, while the winners having won are content to permit their vanquished opponents to try again.

The increased visibility of the corporate behavior of educational institutions as employers, landlords, and investors, however, entails the danger that students may be introduced to ethical practices that are at odds with standards that are professed in the classroom. This hidden curriculum is inescapably, if unwittingly, part of values instruction and is therefore inseparable from other teaching functions. Similarly, professors who engage in rancorous personal rivalries, elevate their own self-interests to universal philosophies, and distinguish between their "work" and teaching, nevertheless teach more than they intend.

But even if corporate ethics were sublime and the faculty a community of saints, we would still be obliged to decide to which values, if any, universities and colleges wish to bind all students in the face of the pervasive ethical relativism that is characteristic of our time and circumstance. The moral agnosticism of the Zeitgeist is reflected by the academy and fortified by specific intellectual perspectives which are incorporated in disciplines. Thus, for example, since some social determinists deny any agency to the will, they are at a loss to find any basis for condemning transgressions against legal and moral norms. The basic conceptual categories of psychoanalysis likewise confer moral immunity. As we proceed from "normality" through "neurosis" to "psychosis," a default of obligation ceases to be a

character defect and becomes a pardonable illness. Nor is moral certainty fostered by Death-of-God theologians or by positivist philosophers who regard value propositions as "emotive" expressions or interesting only as subjects for linguistic analysis. These formulations are surely antagonistic to efforts to achieve a consensus on values, but students could not be protected from these and kindred heresies without depriving them of some of the most pervasive, influential, and stimulating ideas of twentieth-century thought.

Ethical neutrality, then, arises not out of glad conviction but as a reluctant concession to ambiguity. Neutralists contend that since the academy has exhibited no superior gifts for adjudicating value conflicts, a faculty's special claim to a hearing rests solely on its professional expertise. Professors are thus not entitled to borrow institutional authority to regale a captive population with their own personal or collective moral truths.

This display of moral reticence on the part of ethical neutralists conceals their own unacknowledged, and perhaps unrecognized, commitment to a system of values whose claims are as imperious as any. Educators may remain aloof from all other declarations of moral choice, but they may not refuse to honor the ethical structure that sustains scholarship and teaching. If the neutralists were to concede as much, and the activists were to insist on no more, then colleges could hope to build a consensus around values that all could share. It would be necessary first to identify both the elements of the academic ethic and their extensions in order to make explicit what is sometimes grasped only half subliminally.

Jacob Bronowski, Eric Ashby, and Robert Merton have more than most sought to understand the culture of scholarly investigation, and a sampling of their perceptions of its value com-

ponents may assist us to decide if these also adequately define the moral functions of undergraduate education.[6]

Integrity:
Scholars "do not cheat" (J. B.)
and have "reverence for truth." (E. A.)

Balance:
Scholars do not "make wild claims."
The suspension of judgment...and the detached scrutiny of beliefs...have periodically involved science in conflict with other institutions." (R. M.)

Civility:
Scholarly "disputes are fairly decorous" and "they listen patiently to the young and to the old who both know everything." (J. B.)

Open-mindedness:
Scholars "appeal neither to prejudice nor to authority" (J. B.)
and "moral authority in universities, therefore, can be an authority which avoids dogma." (E. A.)

Humility:
Scholars "are often quite frank about their ignorance" (J.B.) and their awareness that "all truth may be contaminated by error...generates humility." (E. A.)

Respect for the Past:
The "recognition by scientists of their dependence upon a cultural heritage..." yields "a sense of indebtedness....The humility of scientific genius is not simply culturally appropriate but results from the realization that scientific advance involves the collaboration of past and present generations." (R. M.)

Universalism:
The acceptance or rejection of claims entering the lists of science is not to depend on the personal or social attributes of their protagonist; his race, nationality, religion, class and personal qualities are, as such, irrelevant." (R. M.)

Internationalism:
"It is immaterial whether a scholar's theory is upset by one of his countrymen or by an enemy...it is upset all the same." (E. A.)

Equality:
There is "equality for any scholar, however junior, who advances knowledge" and he "has his place in the guild of learning." (E. A.)

Communalism:
"The scientist's claim to 'his' intellectual 'property' is limited to recognition and esteem which, if the institution functions with a modicum of efficiency, is roughly commensurate with the significance of increments brought to a common fund of knowledge." (R. M.)

Accountability:
"The translation of the norm of disinterestedness into practice is effectively supported by the ultimate accountability of scientists to their compeers." (R. M.)

This description of some elements of the scholarly ethos is hardly exhaustive but, even as it stands, it tends to explain why according to Merton there has been a "virtual absence of fraud in the annals of science"[7] and to substantiate Bronowski's claim that "by the worldly standards of public life, all scholars and their work are of course oddly virtuous."[8] A college's commitment to this particular array of values seems advantageous on a number of grounds: [1] they are applicable to a variety of personal, occupational, and social contexts; [2] they can be directly assimilated to the basic functions of all institutions of higher learning, i.e., the preservation, transmission, and creation of knowledge; [3] they are ideally communicated in every class and not merely in connection with specific disciplines, courses, or topics; [4] they can be transmitted by teachers who do not possess extraordinary personal qualities so long as they obey their own professional codes; and [5] they are closely linked to the values of a democratic society, which among all political systems provides the most felicitous context for science, scholarship, and instruction.

As Henry E. Sigerist has observed, "It is impossible to establish a simple causal relationship between democracy and science and to state that democratic society alone can furnish the soil suited for the development of science. It cannot be a mere coincidence, however, that science actually has flourished in democratic periods."[9] There can be no doubt that whatever

is the case in the natural sciences, productive work in the social sciences and the humanities is seriously damaged when it is responsive to government ukase and the official party line of totalitarian societies. Colleges are thus obliged to endorse the values of a democratic society because, to reverse a celebrated dictum, what is good for the country is good for education. Accordingly, they would violate the articles of their own charter if they failed to convey to students their own strong commitment to the master terms of the democratic tradition: "security," "liberty," "fraternity," "equality," and "justice." These represent the aspirations to be safe from external attack or domestic threat, to exercise political freedoms, to live with one's fellows in solidarity and comradeship, and to enjoy similar amenities, rights, and obligations as all other citizens.

There are at least two particularly troublesome objections that might be advanced against the conception that colleges should seek a consensus based on explicit or implicit extrapolations of their own values: [1] the ethical tenets underlying scholarship and teaching are not sufficiently inclusive especially as they relate to problems of personal identity; and [2] academic values are highly abstract and, as such, are either wholly vacuous or insufficiently restrictive.

It is undeniably true that the major academic values such as truth, universalism, disinterestedness, etc., have greater implications for defining responsibilities and obligations, i.e., for the development of "character," and are less relevant as guides for personality enhancement and "self-actualization." This does not appear to be a crucial flaw in view of the restricted sovereignty that a college should exercise in the purely personal sphere. The institution's responsibility is properly limited to providing an environment and a wide range of curricular experiences which assist the student to discover who

he is, what he wishes to become, and his conceptions of the good life. It has no warrant for placing its imprimatur, for example, on the values of safety or adventure, asceticism or acquisition, premarital chastity or sexual experience, unless, as in the case of illegal drug use or excessive consumption of alcohol, some forms of behavior disable the student and entail undesirable consequences for the community. For the most part, young adults should be at liberty to confront their most profound existential problems without requiring the approval or incurring the censure of corporate orthodoxy. At the same time, students should recognize that a college is an intellectual and not a therapeutic community, and while they may expect help in "finding themselves," they will be obliged to conduct the search mostly on their own time.

The abstract nature of academic and democratic values poses greater difficulties. A student speaking in the name of "justice" might, for example, support or oppose affirmative action programs, endorse or reject proposals for the elimination of the oil depletion allowance, or approve or disapprove of increasing social security benefits. It might appear that a value so generously laden with meaning can command universal assent mainly because it yields no consequences. This indictment is too severe. A general moral standard will seldom eliminate all degrees of freedom and permit one and only one specific derivation; its utility must be measured by the more modest criterion of its capacity to narrow the range of choices by identifying a substantial number of options as falling outside the limits of ethically permissible behavior. The concept of justice and other elements of the democratic ethic stands vindicated when judged in this fashion.[10] It excludes, for example, genocide, socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor, unequal expenditures for public education on the basis of district property wealth,

the denial of good grades to able but intellectually obstreperous students, calling fouls on rookie centers and excusing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar - and the list could be indefinitely expanded.

The debate on the proper role of college in the value sphere, then, is not a dispute between moral nihilists and the ethically committed, but rather a controversy over the appropriate scope and coerciveness of value standards. Consensus which is achieved by mobilizing the institutional authority of colleges on behalf of highly specific conceptions of proper individual conduct and correct social policy at some point ceases to be education and dissolves into partisanship. As in every other political organization, orthodoxy is enforced and heretics must be punished. Herbert Marcuse regards the openness of universities to dissent as an ingenious bourgeois stratagem which he labels "repressive toleration." We may be certain that his Marxist followers would feel no compulsion to resort to this particular form of low cunning.

From another perspective, a recent piece by William F. Buckley reaffirms a thesis which he first advanced a quarter of a century earlier in his God and Man at Yale.[11] According to Buckley, there is a substantial gap between the determinedly conservative values of the Yale trustees, alumni, and parents who support the university and the ideologies that are disseminated by the faculty. Thus, for example, instead of religion, moral absolutes, laissez-faire, the hedonistic calculus, social Darwinism, and the natural superiority of the elite, the faculty seems to favor secularism, cultural relativism, Keynes, Freud, environmental determinism, and the welfare state. The usual claim that academic freedom guarantees that the piper may sing any tune is rejected by Buckley on the grounds that professors have special immunities only in the natural sciences, where disputes can be resolved by incontrovertible evidence. Elsewhere, shared values

are a major and unavoidable component in the evaluation of competence. The English Department will not engage a professor who prefers Joyce Kilmer to T. S. Eliot, nor will Sociology appoint scholars who advocate the use of the whipping post as a deterrent to crime. Since values and taste are not subject to proof, Buckley concludes that Yale professors, like other loyal employees, are obliged to expound the views of their employers. Any social class or political group in a democratic society is at liberty to engage a public relations firm to promote its ideological wares, but it is difficult to imagine by what definition of education we could resolve intellectual disputes by recourse to a poll of the Yale alumni.

The special grace of all education, general or specialized, resides neither in specific questions nor answers but rather in the integrity of the process which brings them into alignment. Academic values are thus compatible with any organization of the curriculum and are sovereign wherever men and women pursue learning as a serious calling. The academic ethic is imperfectly represented by its exemplars, incompletely absorbed by its beneficiaries, applicable to a very limited sector of the moral universe, and constrained by counterinfluences, but if the norms that inform the teacher's art and the scholar's craft are not enough, these are, alas, the only values colleges may offer as distinctively their own.

Notes

1. Some of the issues raised in this paper have been treated in my previous work, and several passages from these earlier writings are here included in revised form. See Marvin Bressler, "Sociology and Collegiate General Education," in Paul F. Lazarsfeld, William H. Sewell, and Harold L. Wilensky, The Uses of Sociology, New York, Basic Books, 1967, pp. 46-62; "The American College: Some Prospects and Choices," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 396, July, 1971, pp. 57-69; [with Judith Higgins] Student Activism:The Radical Decades, United States Office

of Education, 1972; "The Liberal Synthesis in American Higher Education," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 404, November, 1972, pp. 183-193; [with Paul Benaceraff et al.] Report of the Commission on the Future of the College, Princeton University, 1973; "Kohlberg and the Resolution of Moral Conflict," New York University Education Quarterly, 7, Winter, 1976, pp. 2-8; and "The Ethicality of Scholarship," Princeton Alumni Weekly, 77, November 21, 1977, p. 15.

2. In technical usage, "ethics" is customarily employed as a generic term which includes both "values" and "morals"; the former refers to general standards defining the nature of the good in the personal domain, while the latter refers to principles governing right conduct in social relationships. These terms are often used interchangeably in nontechnical discussions, a practice that has been followed in this paper.

3. Earl J. McGrath, Values, Liberal Education, and National Destiny, Indianapolis, The Lilly Endowment, Inc., June, 1975, p. 19.

4. John Rawls, A Theory of Justice, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971; Robert Nozick, Anarchy, State and Utopia, New York, 1974.

5. Nevitt Sanford, ed., The American College, New York, Wiley, 1962; Kenneth A. Feldman and Theodore M. Newcomb, The Impact of College on Students, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1969; Burton R. Clark et al., Students and Colleges: Interaction and Change, Berkeley, Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1972; and Lewis Solmon and Paul J. Taubman, eds., Does College Matter: Some Evidence on the Impacts of Higher Education, New York, Academic Press, 1973.

6. Jacob Bronowski, Science and Human Values, New York, Julian Messner, 1956, pp. 56-57; Robert K. Merton, "Science and Democratic Social Structure," in Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, rev. ed. Glencoe, Free Press, 1957; and Eric Ashby, Adapting Universities to a Technological Society, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1974, p. 86. The citations from Merton appear in the following sequence: p. 560, 557-558, 553, 556, 559.

7. Bronowski, p. 56.

8. Merton, p. 559.

9. Henry E. Sigerist, "Science and Democracy," Science and Society, 1938, 2, p. 291.

10. A somewhat more restrictive view of this matter appears in Bressler, "Kohlberg and the Resolution of Moral Conflict." My current position has been influenced by critical reactions to this piece.

11. William F. Buckley, Jr., God and Man at Yale, Chicago, H. Regnery, 1951; "Giving Yale to Connecticut," Harper's, November, 1977, pp. 44-56. For an illustration of a corporate commitment by a college to conservative values, see "The Rockford College Institute. Why?" and "Appendix." For example, "At the policy level, we have recognized that as a private college, our future is inextricably bound to the success of private enterprise if students and their families are to be able to pay the tuition we must charge to sustain our private status, and if there is to be sufficient capital surplus to permit the private philanthropy on which we depend. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to help all our students understand the productive genius of our economic system and encourage them to make our implementation of that system stronger and wiser rather than working to circumscribe or destroy that system," n.p.

TELEVISION POWER AND AMERICAN VALUES

William Lee Miller

I am as old as radio; our oldest child is as old as television. She and her younger siblings have a hard time imagining a world, a home, an evening, in which there is no television. It is even a little hard for me to remember life before television. Stephen Leacock wrote that he had long years of experience in the banking field - as a depositor. I have an analogous experience in the television field, from watching Milton Berle to watching "Saturday Night Live"; from finding a bar with a TV set in Chicago to watch Murrow's program on Joseph McCarthy to taping Walter Cronkite's interview with Miss Lillian.

The interpretation of American television at the most general level is like that of other "advances" of modern technology, the so-called "progress" since the Industrial Revolution. These advances are accompanied by enormous costs and dangers. And of course the full effect is not that of one invention alone but of the complex whole; television is inextricably interwoven with the rest of modern technological society.

But television, like modern technological society, is not the total monster that some, partly in reaction to the opposite view, see it to be: writers like Jacques Ellul, agrarian romantics, returners to the soil. With all of the costs, these developments in industrial productivity, in transportation, and in communication represent net gains in the life of the broad populace. Modern technology, particularly television, has values that are peculiarly difficult for the articulate to appreciate and dangers that are peculiarly difficult for the general public to perceive.

As to the articulate classes, we dictate our denunciations of "impersonal," "dehumanizing" modern technology onto tran-

scribing machines; they are typed on electric typewriters; they are "published" by the earliest of the decisive technological advances, the printing press; they are transmitted (to the allegedly alienated public) by modern means of transportation and communication. We will discuss our books denouncing television on television talk shows, if any one will invite us to appear on them. Jacques Ellul's excoriation of technology is available in paperback in small Midwestern cities; to bring about that result requires a whole series of uses of the technology the book denounces.

More important, the daily life of the ordinary man is concretely improved in mundane ways. People in what used to be called the underdeveloped countries are busily striving to attain what literati in the advanced nations busily denounce. Television shares to some extent, ambiguously, in that mundane improvement in the daily life of millions that is more obvious in other technological advances - central heating, motor cars, penicillin, modern plumbing, the telephone. These are not what poets sing about, but they are what people latch onto. The justification of mass television is not, first of all, the occasional "good" program but just the addition to the life of the ordinary person of another, more complete and accessible and varied source of entertainment and information than had hitherto been available. Proposition: Life is more <u>interesting</u> for the elderly poor, for people living alone, for patients in hospitals (you walk down the corridor and quickly learn what is on all three networks), for residents of Gnaw Bone, Indiana, and Skyline, Wyoming, for working class and poor people, the forest of TV aerials over whose homes the critics used to deplore - life is more interesting for the broad public, and especially for the poorer, and more remote, the disabled, disconnected, and disadvantaged, than it was before the advent of television. I was

struck by this aside in Kenneth Tynan's article on Johnny Carson in The New Yorker: "Between April and September, the numbers dip, but this reflects a seasonal pattern by which all TV shows are affected. A top NBC executive explained to me, with heartless candor, 'People who can afford vacations go away in the summer. It's only the poor people who watch us all the year round.'"

I wasn't poor, but I never saw Hank Luisetti shoot a jump shot nor did I know what Art Tatum looked like, much as I admired them, in my culturally deprived youth before television. My son has seen Julius Erving, Walt Frazier, and Bill Walton of the NBA on CBS. The defense rests.

Neither unambiguous progress nor monster, television is not "neutral" either. Television, like technology generally, is not simply an instrument or tool which extends human powers, to be used according to one's choice for good or for evil. The giant levers of modernity have a particularly powerful shape - each one, and the collection of all of them. Taken together, they make the simultaneous centripetal and centrifugal forces that Mannheim described: great new centers of power (30 Rock, hard rock, Black Rock, Fred Silverman) combined with wider and wider "mass democratization" (99 percent of households with a set; 78 percent color sets; 46 percent more than one set; on an "average" Sunday night - the biggest night - 97 million viewers; on other nights, 80 million, 30 million and more watching the same program; 104 million watching Super Bowl XII; 111 million watching Nixon's resignation; 75 million watching at least part of the Carter-Ford debates).

As the automobile eliminated the Sunday-night church service and the use of the parlor for courting and helped to create the suburb, so television will have its own string of unintended side effects in the shaping of a social order. Television, like technology, is neither an unequivocal good nor an unequivocal evil,

nor yet simply neutral, but an enormously powerful phenomenon with quite particular traits, about which the society needs to make conscious social decisions, recognizing the mammoth dangers and kinds of damage those traits can represent.

Television is a condition of our present social life, irreversible; it is an aspect of the perennial human struggle to live together well, which struggle never ends. Obviously, it was an enormous mistake that this potent instrument was allowed simply to grow out of radio and given over therefore to commercial control. It did not require the sponsorship of Maxwell House coffee or the billion-dollar annual revenues for three commercial networks in order for life to be a little more interesting in Gnaw Bone.

* * *

The first of the evident traits of American TV, upon which the others rest, acquired with stunning rapidity in my adult lifetime, is the pervasiveness, ubiquity, inescapability that the figures I cited above indicate. There's no hiding place down here. A friend of mine, disturbed that his son recited television commercials, banished the set from his house. He wrote an article about the impact of television on our values which drew a large response and was reprinted in the Reader's Digest - with, interestingly, the paragraph condemning advertising omitted. He mentioned in the article the TV-less condition of his home, and when he appeared on radio discussion programs incredulous interviewers asked how his children could survive without a television set - how they could learn about President Nixon standing by the China Wall, an event of the time, for example. He calmly explained that there were perfectly good photographs of the President looking at the China Wall on the front page of The New York Times, which ought to suffice.

But his wife had to cope with the children's compulsion to

go next door to watch "Sesame Street" and other programs that are not "Sesame Street." And this man sometimes simply couldn't follow the politics that he needed to follow without a television set. I had the same experience in a futile effort at abstemiousness during a year in California in 1960-61: No television set, I said. The children would have to get along without one. Then came the Nixon-Kennedy debates, and it was Daddy who went out and rather sheepishly brought home a used set. So with my television-criticizing friend, in whose den a TV set now gives out its nightly dose of distorted values.

Even if you don't have one, or even if, as the television people are always saying you can do, you turn off the knob or never turn it on, still you live in a society in which everybody else has a set and everybody else has it turned on. (I remember nightly walks in Princeton, early in the TV days, in which we passed house after dark house in which we would be startled to see the blue-white glimmerings of a TV set.) Man is a social animal. If you don't know who Starsky and Hutch or who Laverne and Shirley are - with some nimble footwork I do not - your children do, your students do, your co-workers do, Time magazine does, and you will. I will.

I read in an article while I was preparing to write these paragraphs that there are two actors who play parts called "Pride" and "Price" in advertisements for the A&P, and that they are better known than was John F. Kennedy. They are asked for their autographs, and dutifully sign "Pride" and "Price." I had never heard of them, but in the end I found out about them. And so will you, whether your sets are on or not. The numbers for television are so huge, crossing all lines of society, and the time spent is so great - six and a half hours a day on the average, eight hours in households with children - as to make television an unavoidable given condition whether we like it or not.

It sets conditions for other institutions. The current President was careful to schedule his State of the Union message on an evening that would avoid competition with, or the supplanting of, the aforesaid Starsky and Hutch; the two previous Presidents were careful to avoid interference with telecast sporting events; television critics enjoy telling about the Milton Berle Effect from the early days, the Senator Montoya Effect during the telecast of the Ervin Committee hearings in 1973, each of which effects has to do with abrupt changes in water pressure in major cities at certain moments (during Berle's program at the commercials). These are but symbols, of course, of deeper effects and displacements. A pair of book publishers talk to their new author and look him over carefully in order to assess not his book but his presence for the purpose of TV talk shows, by which books are sold.

Television not only takes over as the primary celebrity-maker, but also accelerates the celebrity focus in the society. The star system of Hollywood is augmented and made even emptier. Here's Roone Arledge explaining the superiority of boxing to football for television purposes (it will surprise many, no doubt, to learn that pro football is not regarded as the apex, or nadir, of television). "Boxing is great television," Arledge says. "It has all the elements of every kind of television that fascinates people. The small ring - not a big playing space like a baseball diamond. The primitive, simple act of it, so easy to understand.

"And then there is the fact that in boxing you have people who are not only not in the kind of big, anonymous uniforms that football players wear, but in fact their bodies, their faces, almost everything about them is visible, and right there in your living room. You get to know them as people. You fight with them, you get in close.

"It's made for television."

As with sports, so with politics, and life: you get in close, it's made for television. TV seeks the simple set with a single person, in a conflict, dramatized, not the complex arrangement with many people, in the undramatic, unresolved continuity of living.

* * *

My interpretation of television has been built around these four quotations:

Walter Lippmann: "The larger the number of people the simpler the communication must be."

A television executive: "There's no highbrow in the lowbrow, but there's a little lowbrow in everybody."

Fred Friendly in Due to Circumstances Beyond Our Control: "Because television can make so much money doing its worst, it cannot afford to do its best."

Lippmann again: TV attempts to "attract the attention without engaging the mind."

It seeks the focus of the eyeballs, this bubble gum for the eyes, without requiring intellectual effort. When the point is to get the largest possible number - huge numbers - then the point is also to make it as easy as possible, as catchy as possible, as riskless as possible, because every element of difficulty, of controversy, of risk causes a certain drop-off in the huge percentage of the population one tries to catch.

Friendly, of course - to go back to his quotation - was recounting his experience with CBS's famous rerun of "I Love Lucy" during the Fulbright Committee hearings on Vietnam. Friendly wrote: "If we had to interrupt the program for a news bulletin, deletion of a commercial should be the last resort. The standard procedure was to sacrifice the plot, not revenue."

Those quotations represent the obvious defining charac-

teristics of American commercial television: enormous numbers of viewers, attracted for the purpose of marketing products, at a great profit, under fiercely competitive conditions. This last of course is very important: what counts is the share of total viewers one takes away from the opposition. If Fred Silverman can raise NBC's Nielsen ratings one point, it will be worth twenty-five million dollars to the network.

There is, therefore, an enormous struggle for that audience, a high-powered, expensive, market-researched effort to find the ways to get and to keep the prime-time audience. One measures one's work not by external standards, but by Nielsen ratings in competition with the others. An American television program can be watched by twenty million people and judged a <u>failure</u>. From this underlying economic imperative - this "cost per thousand" battle of billion-dollar empires - comes the stereotypes, simplicities, and formulae of the programs, the "Beverly Hillbillies" and the program about the talking horse. "They make no drafts on thought, conscience, or truth."

* * *

The industry defends itself by an appeal to democracy and to free enterprise. But American television fits the moral ideal of neither.

The industry is oligopolistic at the Sixth Avenue top, and oligopolistic with a federal license at the local level - the FCC license to print money. Think with what fierce resistance the industry - the alleged free enterprisers - has fought the possibilities for free entry or wider competition: pay TV, cable TV, public TV as a genuine fourth network. As has been known to happen elsewhere, it's "free" enterprise only for those who have already captured a powerful position.

As to "democracy" - the industry uses the prestige of enormous numbers, of majorities, of the common people, to embar-

rass democratic critics: if millions of ordinary folk like it, who are you, you highbrow, to say it's lousy? The alternative (it is regularly said) is an "elite" imposing their tastes, or the government imposing its will. But obviously those aren't the only alternatives, as the network battles to retain their power attest.

And the numbers they so desperately assemble do not make their enterprise in any meaningful sense "democratic." Democratic counting of heads assumes that the heads have been used for judgment and thought. The action of voting is intended to be a conscious, deliberate act, guided by some notion of the social good, and sometimes it is that. The theory matters. It imputes to the voter deliberate, rational choice and even choice that considers the common good. Go to a swearing-in of naturalized citizens to see what democratic voting means. Nobody pretends that turning on the knob of a television set is such an act. Counting the number of knobs turned is no democratic procedure. It has no heritage of interpretation to accompany it; it has no legal status nor any political philosophy justifying it. If large numbers of people gather to watch a gory accident or gawk at a man standing on the ledge of a high building, such gatherings do not have any of the moral authority of properly assembled majorities in a democracy. A television audience is not a conscious public but a peculiar kind of crowd - almost the sedentary, separated, quiescent equivalent of a mob, because it has been assembled by deliberate calculations about, and manipulations of, its emotions and nonrational drives.

In each of us there are many different attributes, impulses and capacities, at many levels - higher, lower, and in between. We do gaze at gory accidents, bright lights, pretty girls, freaks, oddities. But doing that in large numbers is making no political judgment and has no moral authority.

* * *

But this new instrument does have power - not only the power represented by those numbers, but also the power inherent in the medium. It does more for the recipient with less effort on his or her part. Radio required a use of the imagination to picture Fibber McGee's closet. Television will show you. Visual radio adds sight to the sound of radio; adds movement to the still pictures of photography; adds the transmission of an event as it happens to film. (Aldous Huxley pictured a future means of communication that added the sense of touch and smell, and there were jokes in the early days of TV especially about the latter. Henry Morgan said he'd hate to follow an animal act.) TV adds accessibility to the cinema; the viewer does not need to leave home to get himself to the Bluebird Theatre. Each one of these additions is an increase in communication power. Each is correspondingly a decrease in the demands put upon the recipient.

A professor of comparative literature, arguing against colleagues hostile to television because they think it encourages "passivity" on the part of viewers, wrote "surely watching television is no more passive than reading a novel. Television can stimulate thought," he went on, "as easily as a painting in a museum, or music in a concert hall, or a film in a theatre." His comment stimulated thought on my part, and the thought is that he is wrong. A novel requires the ability to absorb the meaning of a printed page and to create in one's own mind images that the words are intended to convey: there is Wuthering Heights, here is Heathcliff. Television provides the sight and sound of all that for you, with Heathcliff looking all wrong. The experience in the immediate moment of communication at least is more passive on the part of the recipient, with more power in the instruments of the communicator. Richard Hoggart's fine book, The Uses of Literacy, weaves into its careful examination of the impact of mass culture on folk culture de Tocqueville's phrase about a

morally empty "democracy" that "silently unbends the springs of action."

* * *

Let me make comparisons between commercial television and three other institutions which it has in part supplanted and which it resembles in its culture-shaping: church, school, newspaper. They are "secondary" institutions that pump their stuff into individuals, face-to-face groups, families, circles of friends, and hence into the culture.

Each of these others has in some way a content antecedent to its effort to reach the people, which content has some authority, places some limit, and makes some claims. Churches have their messages out of the religious traditions. The schools have subject matter that is to be taught even though students do not understand it or do not want to learn it. Newspapers have a norm besides that of making money - to present news and opinion.

Commercial television has no such given. The great difference between television and these others is that they have a content antecedent to their seeking an audience; TV does not.

The overriding claim on American commercial television is the delivery of audiences to advertisers for the sale of products, in order to make money. Churches, schools, and newspapers have a dual claim - both of the content of which they are the bearers and at the same time of the public to which they should bring it. But television seeks a public with nothing but avarice in its heart. When the industry people say, defensively, "We give the public what it wants," one makes two replies. The first is, no, you don't; the public wants what it gets. You entice and habituate, for your purposes - you do control it, despite your effort to deny your responsibility. The other reply is more damning. You give the public what it "wants"? Yes, you do, in a sense, and that is your self-condemnation.

* * *

Each of the other three institutions I have mentioned has its traditional vocation, with established norms. The priesthood is an authoritative, indelible office, even to the point of being valid independent of the character of the priest; as we know from the novels of Graham Greene, a sacrament is valid even if the celebrant is a bad priest; a mass is valid even if no congregations participate in or understand it. The priest stands in an apostolic succession that is authoritative prior to any characteristics, behavior, attitudes, or votes of believers (or non-believers). Though other religious traditions do not have as sharply defined an authority as the Roman Catholic Church, they have some priest, preacher, rabbi, whose calling is defined by norms out of a tradition not dependent on the passing daily crowd. The teacher has an obligation to subject matter, and a heritage "bequeathed of Socrates," as a teacher of mine used to say. Obviously, good teachers have to listen, to pay attention to the student's state of mind and receptivity, but teachers have a dual responsibility, to the integrity of the subject as well as to the mind of the student.

Though the newsperson has no such longevity of tradition, nor such clarity of professional definition, as the priest and the teacher, he has nevertheless developed an ethic that does make its claims upon him - factual reporting of the news - as many current cases attest.

* * *

Commercial TV has no norms, no tradition, no established vocation with its disciplines. Perhaps it should be compared not to the high institutions listed above but to popular entertainment - to the circuses that went with the bread, to the music hall, to the movies. Even with such comparisons, there are significant differences. These activities at their higher levels develcped their inclination toward art - that is, toward ful-

filling aesthetic criteria within the limits of popular appeal. In commercial television, the aesthetic possibilities are stunted because the prime principle is not just sufficient popular appeal to keep the show going but the delivery of the attention of the immense mob of isolated viewers to the sellers of products. In other words, the mixture of box office and broad acclaim that is the test of popular entertainment - the Music Hall, say, or movies - is not quite the determining criterion of commercial TV. That criterion is "cost-per-thousand" - the attention of huge multitudes of viewers when a commercial is shown. The entertainment is not the substance of the transaction but an instrument of the real transaction. And so the irony that some commercials have aesthetic possibilities the programs - the game shows and sit-coms - don't. As Les Brown wrote: "In day-to-day commerce, television is not so much interested in the business of communications as in the business of delivering people to advertisers. People are the merchandise, not the shows. The shows are merely the bait."

The content of programs is a by-product of this central purpose, and is therefore less likely to take on an artistic life of its own and is under more severe constraints in doing so. It is an artifact manufactured by a collective to respond to market research. Charlie Chaplin didn't work that way.

* * *

Now come some of the exceptions and qualifications. I don't want to mention the "many good things" on commercial TV - actually "Eleanor and Franklin" shows are few, measured by the hours and hours of telecasting. (Public television, with MacNeil/Lehrer and BBC series, is of course another matter.) I want instead to make one small point and discuss one exception.

It isn't quite true that TV seeks the lowest common denominator, as people often say. It does not deliberately seek or

reflect the worst shared interests, but rather the widest; in the books, they talk now about the "least objectionable program": the program that won't make viewers, who are already watching television, switch to another channel. Least objectionableness is different from lowest, however uninteresting the distinction may be to the serious critic of the higher arts. There is a benchmark or minimum allowable effect in mass television that has its own modest worth. It isn't our absolute worst you see there. Blacks, though still stereotyped and carefully subordinated, are in better shape in American television commercials than in American white attitudes and American life. Or in movies in the thirties, full of Stepin Fetchit. TV marks a minimum achievement.

Now the last and most important point: news and public affairs. Here is a division of TV that does recognize a moral obligation, however inadequately it fulfills it.

I chaired a meeting at which a professor of cultural subjects at MIT defended the recent "docu-dramas," like ABC's "Washington: Behind Closed Doors," and Fred Friendly strongly protested. To the MIT professor, it did not matter whether presentations - "stories" - involving actual historical figures were or were not accurate. For Friendly, accurate presentation of the news, of factual reality, is an overriding norm.

Whatever the limitations of the American press, there is a traditional obligation to truthful presentation of factual material, including unpleasant material - some news the public does not want to hear. Television taken as a whole has no such obligation. The news divisions within television have fought uphill against the tendency of the institution of which they are a part - uphill as Friendly's own experience would indicate. The development of "happy talk" news and the use of market consultants to shape TV news programs is a further indication of the

underlying current. Ron Powers tells in his book The Newscasters the terrible story of happy talk and market consultants beginning to carry the day, on behalf of the upstart competitor ABC, against the older normative content of journalism.

* * *

In 1952, I made my way to a Denver hotel where sellers of TV sets had set up several sets on which the general public could watch the two conventions (a marked contrast in the constituencies for Ike-GOP and for the Democrats). In the spring of 1953, we all watched the Army-McCarthy hearings, later Frank Costello's hands in the Kefauver hearings; in 1956, the two Betty Furness programs (i.e., the two conventions). There is a lot wrong with TV's coverage of conventions, campaigns, and elections, greatly due to those characteristics already stated; yet it is in the coverage of public events that television justifies itself (justifies itself because it fulfills a genuine external norm). On the great occasions, it is appropriate that we gather as one people to watch, to participate in, the same event - perhaps most powerfully to this day in the assassination and funeral of John F. Kennedy. We saw President Kennedy inaugurated, with Robert Frost's difficulty reading his poem and Cardinal Cushing's endless prayer. We saw Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial and Lyndon Johnson, saying that we shall overcome. I called my daughter to come and watch, in March 1967, because of a suggestion that something important was coming in another Johnson speech. The Chicago convention? Well, the whole world is watching. My son has not only seen Kareem Abdul-Jabbar; he has also seen Senator Ervin, Sam Dash, Haldeman-Ehrlichman, and the House Judiciary Committee. With the tall ships of the Bicentennial, TV carried a national public ritual of another kind. The service to the common good of all that sharing in public life justifies a lot of quiz shows.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

In his welcoming remarks to the conference participants, Dr. John H. Knowles mentioned the Foundation's continuing interest in problems of contemporary values. "We do not live in an age of literacy," said Dr. Knowles, "and the idea that there might be some value in literacy, or in an exposition of values, has fled the scene." Dr. Knowles described the widespread interest in a discussion held six years ago among Hannah Arendt, Paul Freund, Irving Kristol, and Hans Morgenthau at the Rockefeller Foundation, a discussion that was published as a Working Paper entitled "Values in Contemporary Society" in which the group examined "current cultural and ethical dilemmas." There is today perhaps even more anxiety about the general drift of the country, and Dr. Knowles expressed his gratitude to the assembled guests for their willingness to join in a symposium concerned with prevailing humanistic concerns, in this case, "The Search for a Value Consensus" in American society.

John Maguire, presiding over the first of the four conference sessions, recognized that "there persists the widespread conviction that things are better when there is a consensus in a society about values. Decrying the breakdown in consensus about values and discussing competing value claims has for generations been a kind of European-American academic 'cottage industry.' Within the last few years, not only academics have become concerned with the apparent absence of the value consensus, the parochialism and open conflicts that mark our situation. We have begun to ask, 'Are there no essentials on which unity is possible? If so, where are they to be found?'

"The design of our symposium is a bit like a four-part drama. First, we shall examine and discuss the problems of consensus itself, along with some of the factors that have

contributed to the decline of consensus, the extent to which there is an absence of consensus and the particular human orders - political, economic, moral - in which some consensus is needed. The second session will identify elements and strategies that might contribute to an increase in consensus, especially to the recovery of a shared sense of the common good. The third session will analyze the role of education, particularly higher education, in contributing to a value consensus, and the final session will focus on the role of the media, preeminently television, in forming and shaping personal and social convictions, and in disseminating points of view.

"Our effort throughout the symposium will be to reexamine and reinterpret contemporary experience - especially the American experience - with the sense of a world grown more intimate, interdependent, and full of contending values."

The first three respondents spoke not only to specific points in Professor Boulding's paper, but also interpreted several of the main conference themes from their own perspectives. All three, as John Maguire subsequently pointed out, "highlighted certain changes in our current situation, and the possibility of a recovery of concern for the public citizen." In addition, all three speakers touched specifically on changes in the world's economies, with ensuing changes in national expectations.

William May took an historical approach to the interlocking themes, and to the search for a value consensus. Dr. May pointed out: "The quest for a value consensus is not a new enterprise in the West. Philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages felt that they had identified a common basis for civilization in the concept of natural law. It seemed to provide the West with a comprehensive set of aims and purposes that men and women could share irrespective of religious faith and that could shape at once legal traditions, institutional goals, and underlying moral

convictions. Attacks from a number of quarters undercut the power of natural law to provide an inclusive value system for the West. The religious reformers of the sixteenth century reverted to the particularities of a revelatory tradition, as opposed to the generalities of nature....The Renaissance celebrated a freedom and creativity that stood outside natural law....Nationalists gave precedence to the positive law of their country, and social scientists from the nineteenth century forward detached the law altogether from moral ideal. Legal traditions still remained in force, but they lacked the moral authority of laws derived from nature, nature's God, or human nature. Value consensus fades and the law demands submission with moral persuasion. The privileged hire talent to manipulate the system; revolutionaries repudiate it; and ordinary folk tolerate it but without conviction.

"If a civilization would endure, the problem of value consensus remains. If it is impossible to achieve broad agreement about goals, then one solution is to shift the area of agreement to procedures. The sources of unity in a society shift from content to form, from ends to means, from destination to the mode of travel."

Dr. May maintained that Professor Boulding did not "solve the problem of consensus by identifying substantive aims and purposes which all Americans share." Rather, Dr. May stated, Dr. Boulding identified three institutional mechanisms that managed to accommodate the incredibly diverse value choices found among the population. Dr. May contrasted Dr. Boulding's conclusion - that, despite stressful change, the institutional mechanisms will continue to function successfully in American society - with that of Robert Bellah. Dr. May observed that "Bellah sees the Lockean tradition in a somewhat darker hue than Boulding seems to: its individualism deteriorating into privatism and its pluralism into corrosive self-interest. The genius of the market, according to

Boulding, is that it provides a mechanism for a remarkable array of choices, maximizing liberty and heterogeneity in the culture so long as there is some consensus about the legitimacy of the market itself. But this luxuriant decision-making has its disturbing limits."

In Dr. May's view, the result of the "consumerism" described by Dr. Boulding "encourages the decision-maker to think of himself privatively, that is, as the diminished, merely private self." In contemplating the two approaches, Dr. May would not choose between "tempered optimism" or "qualified pessimism" in deciding which course American society might take in the future.

The effect of change on our economy and the resultant effect that these changes could have on our society, as described by Dr. Boulding, provided the springboard for John Caron's comments. In Mr. Caron's opinion, we are faced with "the prospect of a declining economy, with profound effects on the way people view their lives, and especially their work. My feeling is that the next era will be the 'people' era, accelerated by all the economic factors mentioned by Kenneth Boulding.

"Abe Maslow, an industrial psychologist of some note, described the hierarchy of needs that people have," Mr. Caron continued. "A need is a motivator only until it is filled, and then the next higher need becomes the motivator. The first need is survival; then food, clothing, and shelter; then security. Most Americans are beyond those three need levels. The next need is one of belonging, unity, participation in decision-making, self-actualization. This is where most Americans and Western Europeans are now, and this is something that American business must cope with more and more. 'Quality of life' is an expression very seldom heard a few years ago. Any manager, whether in business or education or government, is involved in the marketplace of recruiting, retaining, and motivating people. To do this

effectively, there must be an understanding of the values people have and what motivates them.

"This is where the universities have a contribution to make. The managers in today's world must be more aware of and responsive to changing values of the people working with them if they are to be effective. This is a great opportunity because an emphasis upon values has now become a pragmatic need."

Alice Ilchman varied Boulding's argument slightly as she described two important changes that in her opinion would profoundly affect the way people think about themselves. First, the "decline in the gap between the very rich and the medium-poor countries." Increase in energy costs, competition among manufacturing nations, and general economic slowdown were cited as reasons for Americans to think of themselves as possessing less security.

Second, Dr. Ilchman suggested that there might be a decline in the perception of the superiority of the status of men. She observed that these changes might "force people to think about themselves and what really counts in their lives." Dr. Ilchman speculated that the promise of the social sciences might be somewhat replaced by the humanities - by literature, philosophy, religious thought. And perhaps the change in status of world powers might force a more cosmopolitan view of the curriculum. We may become more concerned with character, said Dr. Ilchman, and she discussed how one might prepare women for such changes.

"Little attention has been paid to the ethical center of gravity - the technical skills and the assertiveness to use them that equality would allow." Dr. Ilchman indicated that she would like to see "some discussion of the role of women as the keepers of culture and private morality and the role of men with power as the keepers of public morality." She raised the question of the degree of commitment that a student ought to have to an idea or a

mode of behavior. Today, continued Dr. Ilchman, there is "a great support for neutrality. All 'majors' have the same value; each student is entitled to his or her belief. I'd like to suggest that institutions should not be so totally tolerant of all values. Perhaps they should reach an intellectual and ethical maturity by making positive commitments to programs and values which they believe are worthwhile for students to live by. Perhaps a commitment to the responsibilities of the generations for each other - or a commitment to the creative and fruitful tensions between equity and talent."

During the general discussion that followed, concluding Session I, Daniel Callahan said that "people live not only in the larger national system, but they also live in a number of private worlds, and that's where they see signs of real problems." Comments then ranged from analyses of the "macro"- differences between Boulding's and Bellah's papers and their world views - to the "micro"- specific elements of culture change or problems that interested the individuals attending the conference.

Marvin Bressler saw the ideas of Boulding and Bellah as examples of two classical philosophical positions: "objective reality on the one hand, and privatism on the other," with Dr. Bellah objecting to excessive privatism and Dr. Boulding's stand being rather more optimistic. John Maguire also amplified the differences between the two papers by referring to Dr. Boulding's stress on the remarkable resilience of the American political order, with its enormous diversity and adaptability. From Dr. Bellah's point of view, he noted, if the "liberal" society continues to follow its natural course, we would eventually see the dissolution of Dr. Boulding's political order.

Responding to some of the general points made in the discussion, Dr. Boulding reiterated his thesis by pointing out that "society is a construct," and that "the only place where

there are any human values is in the human mind. All the values that we know about are the result of human valuation."

Some commentators rejected this idea of Dr. Boulding's as artificial, unrealistic, and overly optimistic, but Dr. Boulding persisted: "The dynamics of legitimacy dominate all social systems," he said, and argued that these dynamics lead to a structure that allows for great diversity in society, with ensuing resiliency and longevity of social institutions.

Dr. Bellah observed that although the differences between himself and Dr. Boulding were more practical than theoretical, Dr. Boulding was, he felt, more confident that "procedural structures are going to weather our storm, while I am more worried that the erosion of substantive values has gone very far."

The "private worlds" mentioned by Dr. Callahan, in which individuals are more apt to see problems, were the subject of extended discussion. Although all of the speakers had their own examples, it was generally agreed that increasingly rapid social change exerts educational and social influences on children and adults alike, leading to new, perhaps confusing, values that do not cohere - and hence do not replace the more highly organized value systems of the past. Several participants agreed.

Daniel Callahan: "What are you supposed to pass on to your children?...What are they supposed to do with their lives? How are our children to relate to the larger society?...I find enormous anxiety among parents. They're not sure of their own values....We are an increasingly litigious society....We don't find that we have common moral codes."

David Halberstam: "People feel vulnerable. Things we grew up with are gone....There is a new rootlessness."

Marvin Bressler: "There are two big ideas in the last few years: equality and pluralism. If you look into both of those,

it's an agreement that we are going to tolerate all sorts of differences. What troubles people in addition is that you develop the notion in one area and then you can't turn it off. Pluralism came about in response to ethnicity. Once you say that pluralism is all right at the ethnic level, how do you then stop it with respect to ideals or sexual relationships? People sense that they've lost control."

At the opening of Session II, Dr. Colton continued the theme of "The Search for a Value Consensus" by asking the question: "We speak about a value consensus in the present, but can there be a consensus about the values of the past?" Historians, he affirmed, would find it impossible to agree on such a consensus, and went on to suggest that there would inevitably be wide disagreement over the values of the present. "When we are concerned about 'lost values,'" he noted, "we are really concerned about shifting values in a rapidly changing society."

The nature of our changing society was addressed by various respondents, none of whom accepted Dr. Bellah's theoretical structure without amendation. In general, they not only disagreed with his generally pessimistic conclusions, but also felt that cultural elements existed or were arising in this country that could aid in restructuring values.

Alison Bernstein spoke first: "Professor Bellah is concerned that ours is a society in which the ideology of individual self-interest, which he labels liberalism, is running wild in the streets. He does not fully explain or explore the hegemony of liberalism. When did it overtake the other two competing ideologies? Was this only a twentieth-century phenomenon or did it arise in the nineteenth century with early American industrialization? His ambiguous association of liberalism and capitalism needs further elaboration. Furthermore, Bellah appears to see the emergence of both biblical religion and republicanism as

'disembodied' movements, unconnected to historical context or economic realities. Finally, Bellah misses the most important connection of all. He fails to explore the religious roots of liberalism itself. If he did, he might have found that early Christianity not only contained a sense of community, but also the seeds of individualism, with its emphasis on individual, not group, salvation. In short, Christianity may have harbored the seeds of its own destruction. It didn't take liberalism to undermine it.

"We must ask also whether he has correctly identified the villain. I'd argue that all has not been well for a long time, perhaps as long as 200 years, and that at least the pluralistic aspects of liberalism have helped us isolate the country's socioeconomic diseases of which sexism and racism are the most pernicious. Bellah only identified those so-called competing ideologies which trouble a highly elite smokers' club of male intellectuals. He does not even address the tensions which gnawed at the rest of colonial society, or the countless trade-offs and limitations on individual freedom which were being legitimized as these men legitimized their own personal republic."

Not only did Ms. Bernstein believe that Professor Bellah's description was historically incomplete, but she wondered why "Bellah seems unable to identify those new communities that are creating their own futures. In a way I am strangely sympathetic to Bellah's dilemma and that of countless other white males as they watch women and Third World people strive to build their own sense of community. Some may participate, but they cannot take it over. If they watch closely, they will see miracles occur before their very eyes, like the one that happened last fall in Houston, or the 122 miracles whereby male-dominated professional associations have voted to boycott anti-ERA states. Bellah might find that these people are forging a synthesis of his three

competing ideologies in a language which everyone understands, which is at once spiritual, democratic, and, most importantly, nonpatriarchal."

Herman Blake also maintained that Dr. Bellah's synthesis was too limited, and voiced the complaint that "in an academic symposium, we engage in an exchange about the ideas which are an end result of our experiences, but rarely do we discuss our experiences - thereby giving shape, substance, and depth to our convictions. While such an approach is necessary, it is also unfortunate, because it deprives us of an in-depth understanding of each major assertion; they become more pedantic than persuasive. This is particularly unfortunate when discussing values, and even more when discussing the grounds for a value consensus, for values are the central essence of our experience; they are at the very heart of our being. To reach some profound understanding, to achieve any real agreement and synthesis, will require much more than an intellectual synthesis."

Echoing Alison Bernstein's idea that Dr. Bellah's three-pronged analysis was too simplistic, Dr. Blake said, "In my view, Bellah's paper shows an excessive concern about liberal individualism. I am always troubled when so many of our problems or ills are attributed to such a limited range of causes. Too little explains far too much for me. There may be knowledge here, but there is little understanding. Ideologies are the consequence of social experiences, and it is the understanding of those social experiences which we seek, yet Bellah provides us with no understanding."

Dr. Blake declared that the key to understanding, which Dr. Bellah's paper lacked, in his view, should be based on personal experience: "I would suggest we go further and investigate carefully those social experiences which create the kind of values we can support as essential to our continued existence. We

should focus on ways to perpetuate these meanings through new and more creative social experiences. Bellah identifies some incipient strains in American society which could have a profound impact on our society in the future. It seems to me that if these strains are imminent, we can move forward if we begin to show how these strains and the consequent struggles have led us to focus on the common good in a creative way in the past. Those historical lessons could help light the paths into our future."

William Sloane Coffin continued the analysis of Bellah's theses. In agreement with many of Dr. Bellah's points, Mr. Coffin remarked that perhaps some of the ideas could be amplified. For example, there was Dr. Bellah's point that modern institutions do not serve the common good and that justice is often neglected. Mr. Coffin agreed: "We are properly accused of having a vested interest in unjust structures. We're sympathetic, let's say, to a crucified Christ, but we remain loyal to the institutions which did the crucifying." In addition, "That is why our foreign policy is such a disaster, because foreign policy reflects domestic attitudes."

After discussing other of society's deficiencies that had not been referred to in the paper, Mr. Coffin mentioned Dr. Bellah's second lost strain - biblical religion - and suggested that it was a subject that could have been expanded further. Indeed, he believed that "one of the most important values that the biblical religion has to offer the world today is the understanding that every single one of us on this planet belongs one to another." Mr. Coffin talked about human unity, pointing out how humankind was not called upon by God to create this unity: "It's only something we've been called on to recognize. Every single major problem in the world is both international and interrelated. The only possible future the globe has is a global future."

Robert Bellah defended his paper, remaining faithful to his text, and mentioned the difficulties in compressing a complex theme into a few pages: "I would like to point out a few things about the capacity of liberalism, and here I use 'liberalism' to indicate an ideology, but also to indicate a social and even an economic order. I don't think ideology is a cause; I think it is a complicated set of factors that interact with social and economic realities. It is more, let us say, an indicator than a cause. But the capacity of liberalism to corrode, corrupt, and exploit every so-called liberation movement is to me one of the most striking features of recent American history."

In opposition to those conference members who felt that new support networks are being created in various ways throughout the nation, Dr. Bellah responded: "Liberalism is an ideology of the strong. Liberalism in a sense liberates the strong, and when we look at what has happened in the last ten or fifteen years, what we see is that for certain privileged ethnic minorities things have gotten very strikingly better. For the great majority of blacks in America, the relative difference has not improved, and indeed has perhaps gotten slightly worse. That rhetoric of change and improvement has, I think, for a large part of the black community, only deepened the cynicism, because the gap between aspiration and reality is greater than ever. It would require supportive structures and a genuine social responsibility, and a genuine sense of participation in a whole series of intermediate structures that would provide the support for people who are not especially strong as individuals to take advantage of opportunities."

The conference participants, interested in clarifying Dr. Bellah's definition of liberalism, continued to cite examples of other historical influences that they professed to be of importance equal to the three strains of Dr. Bellah.

Sydney Ahlstrom, for example, talked of the importance of the Puritan revolution, the "first real social overturning in Western civilization," and William Miller also saw "limitation in the alternatives offered to us as the ideological streams in the history of American values." Dr. May described the variety of social reforms - socialism, populism, other nineteenth-century movements - that left strong residues in American history. Also wishing that Dr. Bellah had expanded some of his ideas a little further was Richard Rubenstein, who did, however, support the paper by saying, "To come down as heavily as some of us have done on Bob Bellah's deeply sensitive and I would say classical reflection on the limitations of liberalism is to misread his intention." But Dr. Rubenstein also believed that an important point had been overlooked. Quoting Max Weber, Dr. Rubenstein pointed out that "ideas had unintentional consequences. Bellah does not stress the fact that the biblical religion that he was talking about was deeply sectarian and therefore it divided the world into the elect and the damned, so that human values had a rather limited distribution in this framework; and not only that, one of the unintended consequences of this division of the world into the elect and the damned is social Darwinism, and the survival of the fittest. Not only does this kind of biblical religion lead to individualism, but I think Weber has established very well that it leads to the kind of rationalization of consciousness in which a practical rationality proceeds on the basis of the end you wish to attain, and you attain it irrespective of any human social consequences. Let us remember that we are where we are because we are the heirs of the unintended social consequences of the biblical religion, and especially its secularization and rationalization of consciousness."

Although these historical themes were at the center of much of the conversation during this session, a few of the

participants talked about some of the possible areas of change.

How a social revolution might really come about was a question in the minds of some. Professor Boulding, for example, asked Mr. Coffin, "Do you think world justice can be achieved only by the triumph of communism?"

"No," replied Mr. Coffin. "But I do think it will be achieved by the poor, rather than by the rich divesting themselves of their riches and power."

Dr. Boulding seemed to disagree: "The poor will never achieve anything until they get rich." And, in addition, Dr. Boulding asserted, "The greatest enemy of the poor are the radicals. These are the people who want to substitute the concentration of power for the concentration of wealth. This is not the way to help the poor."

Herman Blake disagreed. He did not believe that the "poor are necessarily the salvation of this society, or of any other persons or groups," but rather that there were common kinds of experience that needed analysis.

The most optimistic strain was formulated by those conference members who believed that a self-help commonality was possible in various strata of society. Alison Bernstein, for instance, saw in the women's movement the presence of "supportive structures, and there is in the experience of women both the attention to community and individual freedom. If you look at that phenomenon, you will not quickly come to the conclusion that it is merely the fragmentation of individuals without some effort to create consensus and community."

Various alterations in society were apparent also to David Halberstam, who saw that "things have changed - the balance between young men and young women, and between men and women in general." Seemingly superficial changes in manners and customs,

Mr. Halberstam believed, would in time lead to real changes in the structure of society.

If David Halberstam saw real transformations in future society, John Caron was concerned with the world of today, in which he noted a yearning for different values - or at least a desire to examine one's place in the contemporary world. Many businessmen, he believed, have a need for direction in their lives once success has been achieved and wish to turn their attention to more humanistic concerns.

William May proceeded to an overview of the varied opinions about the success, or lack of it, in finding a value consensus in modern society: "Bill Coffin, in a very interesting point, suggested that values are recognized, not really created; they're discovered and acknowledged, and his illustration was that the unity of the human race is something that people are called to recognize; they do not invent it. Now, I think when one talks about the status of values, we must recognize that values and freedom are locked together. They're linked together, and that's what allows one to describe values as invented and created. But values are also received, discovered, recognized, and responded to. It is a function of humanistic inquiry not simply to discover and articulate the value consensus that is among us and to go out and execute it directly, but also to recover the link between value and freedom, tradition and possibility, and that seems to me what we're about in the course of this conference."

As an historical aside, and in the context of a search for a value consensus, Lawrence Cremin described the views of John Dewey: "I think all three of the traditions Bob Bellah discussed in his paper are found in John Dewey, who spent the latter part of his career facing the problem Bellah poses. He spoke about a reformulation of the individualistic aspects of the liberal tradition that he learned from Mill and de Tocqueville and James,

and made them suitable for a democratic society. He sought to find what he called the eclipsed public, and found that he could find only publics, but in the search for publics, he was involved in our search for value consensuses, in other words, not an overall value consensus, but increasing levels of consensus. He said that democracy is more than a form of government, it's a form of conjoint communicated experience. And the experience that you have as an individual, and that you have in the various groups of which you are a member, that is the stuff of which publics are made, of which public values are made."

Dr. Bellah ended the session with a rebuttal to his critics, retaining his pessimism to some extent, but interjecting some hope for the future: "I think we do have a consensus in America, a very unfortunate one, a consensus around an ideology which can never provide an adequate center; a center that will hold, but a consensus that is deeper than much of the alleged conflicts and dissensus that we have heard. We are in a great upheaval, the outcome of which could be positive if the social institutions that would support the positive dimensions develop. Otherwise I am gloomy about the real benefits as opposed to the very real costs of what is going on in much of American society today."

* * *

The focus of Session III moved somewhat away from broader questions concerning values - and, as expressed by Adele Simmons, whether there should even be a consensus - and moved toward the transmission of values.

The discussion centered on a few main points. Most participants agreed that students on campuses today are quite different from, say, those of the sixties, but what do those differences mean from the perspective of the education of the student? And in discussing that education, what ought to be the attitude of the university? Should it commit itself to what it might believe

to be certain moral truths? And beyond the question of specific ethical judgments to be absorbed or not in a university setting, was it even possible, considering the complex interests of the university itself today, to think of imparting such judgments?

William Bennett spoke first, noting that Dr. Bressler had questioned the usefulness of an undergraduate education and also whether it was possible, in any event, to articulate values. Dr. Bennett suggested that his pessimism was misplaced, pointing out that "first, as a matter of fact, many Americans can and do speak of America as a great society, and they do so without either irony or despair. Many Americans believe their lives do have compass." Dr. Bennett listed many grounds for consensus among Americans, asking, "Among whom are we searching for a values consensus? If you are looking for value consensus in a philosophy department, you may not find it as often as you may find it in other marketplaces." Bennett spoke to the question of the institution's commitment: "I don't much believe in a posture of ethical neutrality. Certainly there are issues to which considerations of ethics don't apply, but I think in general a posture of ethical neutrality is not to be recommended. There are too many issues on which one should not be ethically neutral."

Secondly, he made the practical observation that despite disagreement about commitment or not, the method of transmittal was not always perfect: "On the integrity of the academic process and values, I would say the integrity of the academic process is a promise; it is not always a fact."

Harriet Sheridan agreed on this point, and then concentrated on the experience of students and their complex relationship to the educational environment. "Just as students do not arrive on campus innocent of values, but come to us exhibiting the effects of massive infusions of TV, of their own subculture, and of a welter of other influences, some of which may even be home and

religion, so students do not simply go to class to study, but go to class to speak and be spoken to, to act and be acted upon.

"The issue I would like to center on is the need for a values consensus that exhibits itself in institutional behavior as it is broadly defined. Those teachers and administrators who listen to students, who bend or waive inscrutable regulations for particular needs, who care less about judgment and more about growth, who themselves perfectly observe the most exquisite standards of academic rigor and actively help students attain such standards, thereby freeing students from their own lack of confidence so that they can help others in need of help, those teachers and administrators are exponents of values.

"That values are inherent in the intellectual processes the academy conducts is obvious. That they are also inherent in the conduct of these processes is less remarked upon. That the process of discrimination amongst values can be taught, thereby not merely allowing students but rather encouraging them to make choices, is also assumed. It is the role that teaching plays as a function of institutional behavior with respect to these assumptions that I emphasize, for the obvious reason that teaching is the active part, the part that affects all students most visibly, and that in the past has most often received the closest attention, yet seems in these times to be receiving much less.

"Students come whole, freighted with values, some of which will bear them down. They are students and they are learning, and they will learn to be objective about evidence and to give credit where credit is due with proper guidance in the classroom. But when they are on campus, they are away from other sorts of influences from parents, from friends, from the conventions of their own community; like it or not, they are going to grow and change, and they look to the new academic society for help in the evolution of a whole person's ethical standards."

John Smith also addressed the question of teaching ethics, but believed that most important of all is the teaching of judgment: "In all cases where decisions must be made, judgment is required, and that is an art to be developed - which cannot be done by presenting students with authoritative decisions already made." Dr. Smith argued that a distinction ought to be made between "some sort of institutional commitment to particular forms of values, and the commitment of individual teachers," and, in addition, he pleaded for a middle way to be taken by the educational community. He asked, "Is there nothing between endless openness, which is ultimately irresponsible, because it seeks to avoid the unavoidable risk of judgment, and the absolute solutions, which terminate the discussion?"

Dr. Smith found he had only one serious disagreement with Dr. Bressler - the question of the unacknowledged values of teachers and their perhaps unwitting transference to students; the difference between what is said theoretically and what is made clear through actions or implicit cues: "There is no field of intellectual endeavor where a teacher can avoid indicating value choices of decisions of all sorts. I want to emphasize the danger lurking in the teaching of someone who has largely unacknowledged and uncriticized value standards and assumptions which are communicated at the same time the teacher is claiming to be neutral. As Dr. Cremin noted, Dewey was right. Value differences cannot even be discussed until all involved admit their existence. This admission is no easy road to a value consensus, but it is at the very least the acknowledgment of the most demanding value of all, and one which is so often lacking, namely, honesty."

William Coffin agreed with John Smith's last point, saying, "I was always impressed by the fact that values are much more caught than taught."

Robert Bellah, developing the idea, agreed that values are transmitted unconsciously, but added: "We do it in the context of a tradition of doing so. The more we make that clear, and the more we teach students the sense of the traditions - with their problems and their difficulties as well as their insights - we are transmitting something more than the norms of scholarly research. We are transmitting to them certain things that have a substantive quality."

Two important themes recurred. First, participants stressed the need for students to broaden their experience both on and off campus, in some cases to help counteract confusion caused by the disparity found within the university between the academic ideal and reality. Dr. Callahan, along with several others, believed that "virtues suitable for the academic scholarly life are not necessarily sources for moral lives or individual decision-making." Harriet Sheridan also echoed this sentiment: "Scholars, trained in graduate schools and brought into a classroom, do not miraculously become teachers who are the articulators of the values by which the ordinary student goes out to live in the world."

The debate turned from questions of what values should be transmitted, and by what method, to the nature of the transmitter itself: the university.

Marvin Bressler, although recognizing the limited effect of the university, insisted that the educational process had positive impact: "What can the university do within that range and in the recognition of its relatively limited, modest impact? My answer is that the impact comes from what we do, mainly our strong and passionate commitment to the ethical system that sustains the process of scholarship and teaching."

Other participants stressed the negative aspects of our

educational institutions as they now exist. John Smith, for example, noted that "ruthless competitiveness" is generally acknowledged in the business community, and compared it with the more subtle forms of disguised competitiveness found in academe. Others mentioned competing claims of scholarship and budget, hypocrisy and political maneuvering within academic departments, the idea of publish or perish, the research professor uninterested in undergraduate teaching. John Maguire summed up: "What strikes me most about colleges and universities as I see them in operation is not the exercise of these virtues of scholarship and teaching which you enumerate, but the activity that we think of as power, which virtually makes a mockery of the very virtues that this tradition of the isolated scholar-teacher celebrates."

* * *

The dissemination of values through a specific medium - television - was the theme of Session IV, as the conference moved from the general to the specific. What are the effects of TV, and has it, as a powerful medium, added to the atomization of values? Each respondent referred to William Miller's paper - there was a general agreement that he was, in the words of Sue Cott, "ambivalent toward television" - and then expanded some point of particular personal interest.

Sue Cott (who began by stating that she was voicing her personal opinion and not that of WCBS for which she works), took a pragmatic stand as she concentrated on commercial television. She felt that, in general, too much power is attributed to television's ability to mold opinion, particularly along lines approved by the networks. She disagreed with the "television as devil" theory, which sees the medium bombarding American audiences with propaganda of various sorts. "Americans are not empty vessels," said Ms. Cott, and although she agreed that TV has enormous influence on its audience, there is "no empirical

evidence to suggest that television is changing values." Pluralism is still thriving, and, said Ms. Cott, the idea of manipulation of the millions is absurd. In her view, the audience is "composed of isolated voyeurs," who thus cannot possibly be exploited as if they were a mob. "My own view," added Ms. Cott, "is that television just reinforces preconceptions. It's a mirror of public values."

There is no question, agreed Ms. Cott, that enormous amounts of television are watched, but perhaps the medium is watched casually, used as a tranquilizer, as company, as a relief from daily life. "Television is really the ultimate home remedy. Is television really to blame because people watch it? What's really sad is that they need to watch it because their lives are so barren."

Sue Cott pointed out that we live in a capitalistic economy, and maintained that the competition of commercial stations was, in her opinion, far more desirable than the prospect of government control. "What bothers most people about TV is its commercial nature - that's what critics rail against. But television is the showcase of capitalism; that is what it is about. It's unrealistic to expect it to be other than that. The ideal audience is a good consumer. It's not reasonable to expect stations to give up the basic value of winning in the ratings."

On the question of quality of network output, Ms. Cott defended it by saying, "I think one of the basic problems with criticism of television is something I call the romantic ideal. Television does not live up to certain moral notions and aesthetic purposes." But, still, programs of quality do exist; in essence, according to Ms. Cott, commercial TV, which has "men and women of high conscience working in it, does the best it can within commercial limitations."

David Halberstam disagreed vehemently. In his view, tele-

vision, the most influential force in society, has no value system of its own and is utterly subject to the demands of the commercial networks. As production costs continue to rise, said Mr. Halberstam, "some kind of balance, some kind of mixture, some kind of pluralism, has been overrun by the new contemporary greed of the rating system. Anything experimental is gone, and programs no longer have any relationship to real lives."

In sum, the networks' only concern is to look to their finances, with the result that, according to Mr. Halberstam, television "is a relentless, carnivorous beast. There was a time when the financial part of the broadcasting empire was really an extension of the entertainment, but now entertainment is an extension of finance."

Specifically, on the level of values, Mr. Halberstam believed that values transmitted were almost totally materialistic and lacking in social concern. The way the series characters live, their preoccupation with goods, compounded by the constant barrage of advertisements, the plasticity of heroes, and the lack of reality shown in plots - all this stresses, in overt and covert ways, the materialistic interest of the networks: "All is affected by the accountant's mentality."

Patricia Carbine, the next respondent, asked about the relationship of women to television and how this might be symbolic of their place vis-à-vis other societal institutions. Ms. Carbine agreed with Dr. Miller's view that television is an enormously powerful medium, and mentioned the terrifying challenge to academics to try to counteract the influence of TV: the average American home has the TV set turned on 2,400 hours a year.

Because of its pervasiveness, television has had an overwhelming influence on women's views of themselves, and "there is evidence that many women feel offended by much of what they see on television." They are presented in an unrealistic way; the image

of women is one-dimensional, and hence harmful to the development of a woman's potential.

Television is similar to other institutions, said Ms. Carbine, in how it chooses its leaders. It tends to eliminate women and other minorities, leaving society with a leadership pool of only about 4.5 percent of the population. Indeed, although women constitute between 25 to 35 percent of all people working in media, only 5 percent have reached the policy-making level. "If we're in trouble," observed Ms. Carbine, "perhaps we are not generous enough in looking at the talent available."

What is the response of women? "It is to challenge the power of the institution," in whatever ways available - lobbying, class-action suits, economic boycotts.

What women are really saying to the institutions that affect their lives, television included, said Ms. Carbine, "is that we really are asking for participation as well as accuracy." It's not so much that traditional values are being questioned, but that women feel these values "are not being transmitted because they're not being honored by those who profess to hold them dear."

Ms. Carbine believed that consensus involves the "coming together, the hearing out, of opinions of all the constituencies represented in a body." This applies to all groups, not just women. "We do not want to destroy the best that has been built," declared Ms. Cott, "but we are insisting that we participate in the decisions that affect our lives. We come down to a value that I think is transcendent, and it is, very simply, the golden rule. What outgroups are asking for - demanding - is that we do unto others that which we would have done unto ourselves."

Robert Bellah, in disagreement with Pat Carbine's thesis, said that the real problems in American society did not have much to do with men and women, the ingroup and the outgroup, but

rather with the increasing tendency of society to apply an economic valuation to all structures. This is, according to Bellah, "the absolutely central problem of society - more important than women and minorities."

In countering Dr. Bellah's ideas, several discussants elaborated on the need for change in the power structure. Robert Abernethy, while warning against the tendency to give too much power to those appearing on television, agreed that change was needed. He believed that at bottom there was a problem with basic organization, but perhaps a problem that was not impossible to solve. "On the one hand, you have the extreme of capitalism; on the other, the problem of political control." Abernethy then suggested a middle ground - an experimental idea being tried in Los Angeles; the award of licenses to nonprofit organizations. This would perhaps not substitute a new group for the ingroup, but it might at least eliminate some of the problems of commercialism.

On the subject of ingroups and outgroups and the value of possible interchange, Alison Bernstein and Patricia Carbine clarified their ideas. Each explained that it was not so much a question of substituting one group for the other, but rather that the introduction of new elements would lead to internal change in the power structure. "It will be something new," said Ms. Bernstein; and Ms. Carbine agreed: "It is clear that once the 'outs' insist on participating with the 'ins,' what is 'in' will not be the same. The 'outs' don't want to exchange places, they want change of a positive sort. Unless we can restore human values, it will not have been worth it."

All the participants were not totally critical of television as it exists now, and from time to time a positive note of praise was heard. William Bennett observed that Americans do indeed identify in a positive way with what they see on television - in

drama and sports particularly - and William Miller agreed with Sue Cott's point that there are indeed honorable people working in television. Dr. Miller singled out the news reporters for particular praise, believing that there is among them a tradition that sanctions accuracy.

But it was Richard Rubenstein of Florida State who, in his description of what television means to those who live in Tallahassee, indicated what television as a medium might someday become. Dr. Rubenstein described the variety of channels available, the wide use of videotape machines, the sometimes imaginative programming, and the even greater social importance of the medium because of his area's relative isolation. Certainly no one could know exactly what the future holds, commented Dr. Rubenstein, but a new "video pluralism" is almost certain, a pluralism that might make many of the controversies discussed hitherto obsolete.

Is it possible to see such a search for a value consensus in terms of coalescing ideas? John Maguire, now that the discussion had run its course, commented on the emergence of a pattern: "We've identified dissensus throughout in polar terms - rich, poor; male, female. And so I take it that if one were a strategist for a movement toward value consensus, one would try to establish conditions that permitted conversation between those who are at the present time not in genuine conversation with each other. What we are really searching for when we talk about the search for a value consensus is some set of circumstances that permit human exchange.

Dr. Colton, in closing the conference, elaborated on the idea of "conversation" and the search for a value consensus: "We need to interpret the humanities in the sense of a continuing dialogue, a continuing dialogue on the human condition in terms of everything that has been said and done about it in the past,

and everything that is new in the present." Thanking the participants, Dr. Colton said that in so many ways this conference had reinforced that definition of the humanities. "Even if we have not yet reached agreement, we have at least broadened the dialogue."

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